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CUBAN TOBACCO SLAVERY: LIFE, LABOR AND FREEDOM IN PINAR DEL RÍO, 1817-1886

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CUBAN TOBACCO SLAVERY: LIFE, LABOR AND FREEDOM IN PINAR DEL RÍO, 1817-1886

by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, because I know no one is more proud of it than my mother while I imagine the same would have been true for my father.

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The journey as represented by the following pages has been a long and arduous one, but also one that was filled with significant and critical support. I would like to thank first the members of my committee beginning with Toyin Falola who as one of my first professors at The University of Texas to the eventual chair of my committee has been vital to the development of any pretensions I may have as a historian. And while his professionalism and leadership remains a model to aspire to, it is his support and encouragement that I am most grateful for. I am additionally indebted to Jonathan Brown whose unwavering interest and scholarly critiques made this work immeasurably stronger; to George Forgie for his steadfast belief in both me and this project which proved to be the foundation for the completion of this work; and to Bill Van Norman whose influence and approach to understanding Cuban slavery on my own work will be apparent to all. Lastly, to Matt Childs who has seemingly perfected the combination of the warmth and generosity of friendship with the expectations and guidance of a mentor. To say that this dissertation would not be possible without their involvement is an understatement.

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Cuban Tobacco Slavery: Life, Labor and Freedom in Pinar del Río, 1817-1886

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This dissertation examines the size and scope of tobacco cultivation in the far western Cuban province of Pinar del Río, from 1817 to 1886, in an effort to detail the impact of tobacco upon Cuban slavery and emancipation. This focus is intended to correct the existing historiography that has traditionally either marginalized or assigned false stereotypes to the role of tobacco slaves in Cuban society. Tobacco cultivation, by virtue of its fundamentally different economic structure and size, its regionally specific location and historical development, and the distinct demographic makeup of its work force, suggests different patterns of slavery that in turn precipitated different meanings of freedom than those recognized in other slave regimes. Of central importance is the recognition of the enhanced degrees of autonomy and spaces for independence that the exigencies of tobacco cultivation produced in slavery and in freedom and that were significantly less possible elsewhere.

Emphasizing how different types of labor profoundly affected the different ways that Cuban slaves defined themselves and their environment, this dissertation privileges both the specificity and determinative aspects of crop cultivation, and how the structure

of slave society is informed by a culture of labor. Some of the more critical aspects of slave life and culture – work patterns, living arrangements, family formation, mobility, and the existence of informal slave economies – were all uniquely impacted by the particular demands and demographics of tobacco-based labor.

Despite the dominant role of sugar in the historiography of Cuban slavery, other slaves existed, other forms of labor were pertinent, and the differences and the varieties among these slave societies, were important. Consequently there remains a need for a method of analysis that distinguishes and differentiates among the multiplicity of experiences for Cuban slaves. By identifying a distinct slave population whose structure differs radically from the accepted norm and whose presence has been largely minimized, this dissertation is an attempt at rendering a more nuanced view of Cuban slavery. As a result, tobacco slavery is promoted as an alternative or competing narrative to the overall understanding of Cuban slaves and the processes they created for freedom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

CUBAN SLAVERY

In the history of Cuban slavery, over one million Africans were imported into the island, and more than three-quarters of that population arrived in the nineteenth century. During the heart of Cuban slavery, three commercial crops—sugar, coffee, and tobacco——dominated Cuba's slave-based economy. Of these, sugar's value to the island's overall economy was unprecedented. According to an official census, in 1862 more than 1,500 sugar mills were producing the year's single most valuable agricultural commodity. The dominant position that sugar played in Cuba's economy was a result of its similarly outsized role in the institution of slavery. Sugar accounted for over 170,000 slaves in 1862, more than any other economy in Cuba.[1]

Yet, even at its height, sugar is better represented as having a position of plurality rather than a majority position in Cuba's plantation economy. In terms of land allocation, most of Cuba's agricultural land was devoted to agricultural economies other than sugar, while the value of sugar in 1862 represented less than half the total value of the island's agricultural output.[2] Most importantly for the study of Cuban slavery, sugar-based slaves were never the majority of Cuba's slave population. More slaves were employed outside of sugar than in it. For most of the nineteenth century, the total number of slaves on sugar plantations represented relatively small percentages of Cuba's overall slave population.

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[1] José Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno, 1864).

[2] The total percentage of acres planted in sugar equaled 46.9. Félix Goizueta-Mimó, *Bitter Cuban Sugar: Monoculture and Economic Dependence from 1825-1899* (New York: Garland, 1987), 11. For original source, see Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 2, 4 vols. (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863). More recently it has been argued that sugar only covered 15 percent of the total area of the island at the midpoint of the nineteenth century. Hernán Venegas Delgado, *La Región En Cuba: Un Ensayo de Interpretación Historiográfica* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2001), 64. For sugar's value in 1862, see Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*

In 1825, less than 25 percent of Cuban slaves worked on sugar plantations. From 1830-1850, a variety of sources place the overall percentage of sugar slaves at under 40 percent, with sugar slavery reaching its peak in 1862 as the economy held 47 percent of the total slave population according to one of the last official census.[3] Sugar played a substantial role in Cuban slavery during the nineteenth century, yet because other economies and other slave systems existed, its position in the plantation economy of the island was far less dominant than historians have previously understood.

In a framework that privileges slave-based economic diversity, tobacco takes on new importance in Cuba's plantation economy. Tobacco was the first crop to achieve economic importance in Cuba, while at the height of the sugar revolution in the nineteenth century, tobacco continued to maintain economic relevancy: no agricultural economy produced more value, in proportion to the capital and labor employed, than tobacco.[4] Moreover, in the course of the nineteenth century, tobacco became an increasingly valuable crop in relation to Cuba's total agricultural production. In 1827, tobacco represented 6.5 percent of the island's agricultural production, while by 1862 this figure had grown to 15 percent. Other than sugar, tobacco was the only crop to demonstrate positive expansion in this period. Additionally, tobacco's percentage of

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[3] Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 137; Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27, 32; Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas* (Habana: Impr. de las viudas de Arazoza y Soler, 1831), 110; David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 191; José García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración* (Habana: Impr. del Gobierno y Captianía General, 1852), 140; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 14, 37.

[4] Thomas Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco* (Impr. del Gobierno y Capitanía General y Real Hacienda por S.M., 1850), 5.

increase in total value during this period, 131 percent, nearly equaled the percent increase of sugar at 139 percent.[5]

Just as sugar owed much of its economic expansion to slavery, enslaved labor played a pivotal role in tobacco's sustained growth over the nineteenth century. Precise numbers of slaves working on tobacco farms are hard to come by, but multiple contemporary estimates at mid-century place the island-wide number of tobacco slaves at 40,000.[6] And in the province of Pinar del Río, the epicenter of Cuba's tobacco economy, slaves cultivating tobacco represented the overwhelming majority of the slave community in this area. This far western province included the Vuelta Abajo region, arguably the most productive and valuable tobacco growing land in the world, and home to more than 80 percent of tobacco-based slaves in Cuba.[7] In this tobacco-dominated area, one contemporary official, writing in 1861, placed the number of slaves cultivating tobacco at 33,000, while an 1867 census lists 43,300 slaves in Pinar del Río province.[8] The existence of this slave economy and this slave community means that the narrative of Cuban slavery must not be limited to the story of sugar.

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[5] Gloria García and Orestes Gárciga, "El Inicio de La Crisis de La Economía Esclavista," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867* (La Habana: Editora Política, 1994), 370.

[6] García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 144; Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1866), 573.

[7] Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 38.

[8] Valentin Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861* (Habana: Impr. del Tiempo, 1863). For 1867 census, see Fe Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba* (Editorial Academia, 1986), 81. For statistics listing 28,744 slaves among the three leading tobacco producing jurisdictions within Pinar del Río province in 1869, see also Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873: Colección de Informes, Memorias, Proyectos y Antecedentes Sobre El Gobierno de La Isla de Cuba, Relativos Al Citado Periodo, Que Ha Reunido Por Comisión Del Gobierno D. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat*, ed. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat (Impr. Nacional, 1873), 153.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Despite Cuba's multidimensional plantation economy, the existing literature almost completely disregards Cuban tobacco slavery in favor of a nearly exclusive focus on sugar as the model of nineteenth-century Cuban slavery. This is largely explained by the perspective of scholars who have adopted a dualistic understanding of Cuban slavery in terms of tobacco and sugar. The literature identifies slavery so strongly with sugar that sugar has come to represent the foremost expression of Cuban slavery. Meanwhile, scholars associate tobacco with free labor to such a degree that the literature identifies tobacco as the crop most antithetical to slavery. Clearly, there is a close link between sugar and slavery in Cuban history: nearly all works written over the past two centuries testify to the pivotal role of sugar in Cuban slavery. However, the exclusion of tobacco cultivation from historical analysis of Cuban slavery is patently inaccurate.

Writing in the early nineteenth century, Ramón de la Sagra provides one of the earliest examples of the dualistic approach to Cuban slavery that would come to characterize all later studies.[9] Sagra's analysis, based on sugar's expanding role in Cuba's economy and its increasing use of slaves during this period, promoted the perspective that slavery's role in sugar production came at the expense of tobacco-based slavery. Sagra was an advocate of sugar's expansion, but he was also concerned about the effect that the introduction of so many slaves was having upon Cuba's population. Sagra attempted to counterbalance the "Africanization" of sugar by promoting tobacco as a uniquely Cuban or free-labor crop. According to Sagra, tobacco required skill and diligence that were beyond the capabilities of slaves. For Sagra, tobacco essentially equaled white and free

[9] Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*; Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba: Historia física y política. Introducción, Geografía, clima,población, Agricultura*, vol. 1 (Librería de Arthus Bertrand, 1842).

labor because its intrinsic needs were "associated with the liberty of man, and disdaining the aid of debased workers."[10]

In this view, sugar was the model for slavery, and tobacco was the model for free labor. This perspective gained popularity over the next century, reaching new heights in 1940 with Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*. In his depiction of Cuban slavery, Ortiz augments Sagra's characterization of sugar and tobacco, associating each of these crops with unsubstantiated stereotypes. In an analysis that was widely disseminated, Ortiz connected tobacco not just with the Cuban nation, as an indigenous plant, but with civilization as well, noting that "Tobacco is an inheritance received from the Indian" and that "Tobacco is born a gentleman." By contrast, Ortiz presented sugar, as an import that was "common, unpretentious, undifferentiated."[11] Ortiz extended these cultural associations into labor practices, arguing that "Sugar has always preferred slave labor; tobacco, free men. Sugar brought in Negroes by force; tobacco encourages the voluntary immigration of white men."[12]

Ortiz's legacy would influence the following generation of scholars, including Franklin Knight and Herbert Klein. Although Knight and Klein contributed important works on Cuban slavery, both scholars perpetuated Ortiz's understanding of Cuban tobacco slavery. For Knight, "tobacco farming was an activity of free white and free colored people with very little use of slave labor"; he further insisted that "In reality, therefore, relatively few slaves participated in the delights of the vegas, compared to

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[10] Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:lxxvii.
[11] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 57, 43, 24.
[12] Ibid., 81.

those on the sugar estates."[13] Similarly, Klein contends that tobacco was a "largely free labor crop" which, for Klein, gave it a "sharply democratic flavor."[14] These perspectives fully integrate the earlier assessments of Sagra and Ortiz, yet it is important to note that Klein, in a divergent analysis, also remarks that "a large number of slaves were employed in the cultivation of tobacco."[15] However, this singular and even radical statement found almost no resonance in the next generation of scholarship on Cuban slavery. The fact that it did not is a testament to both how pervasive the model of sugar was in defining Cuban slavery and how important Sagra's and Ortiz's early arguments were in the scholarly understanding of Cuban tobacco.

More recently, the last two decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a new canon of works that significantly updated Cuban slave scholarship. Led by Rebecca Scott, and later Laird Bergad, these historians revised the understanding of Cuban slavery in several fundamental ways, arguing that slave-based labor in Cuba remained profitable until the very last possible moments and that Cuban slaves played a significant role in slavery's abolition. Most importantly for a discussion of tobacco, these historians argued that nineteenth-century Cuba's slave-plantation economy was more diverse than historians had previously understood. Yet, despite rendering a more nuanced view of Cuban slavery, these now seminal works nevertheless retained a near exclusive focus on sugar. In effect, these works retained the perspective that sugar was the singular definition of Cuban slavery.[16]

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[13] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 65.
[14] Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989), 148.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, New pbk. ed. (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985); Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the*

Building upon the renewed attention to the diverse nature of Cuba's slave economies a new generation of scholars have begun to direct their attention to contextualizing sugar within this diversity. Writing in 2001, María Díaz's argues against the "ubiquitous discourse" of sugar, saying that for decades, other economies and communities independent of sugar explicitly have been "drowned out in the literature by an abrasive nineteenth-century concerto for sugar."[17] In similar language, Sherry Johnson claims that "Cuban historiography has been held hostage to studies of sugar"; while her own work, excludes sugar from the analysis of the social, political, and economic changes of Cuba's early colonial period.[18] In 2005, the historian Hernán Venegas Delgado echoed Johnson's criticism, arguing that the historiography has "erroneously, with few exceptions," insisted that the sugar plantation and its associated slave regime held "dominion over the whole island."[19] In his reassessment of Cuban slavery with a concentration on potential new geographic spaces and economic lines operating outside the presence of sugar slavery, Venegas Delgado attempts to qualify the dominant focus on sugar that still persists.[20]

The work that has most fully responded to these calls for studies that challenge the focus on sugar slavery is William Van Norman's examination of slavery in Cuba's

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Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[17] María Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 314.

[18] Sherry Johnson, *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 1.

[19] Hernán Venegas Delgado, "Plantación, Plantaciones. Cuba En Los 1880," *Caravelle (1988-)* no. 85 (December 1, 2005): 63.

[20] Fe Iglesias García can also be considered within this scholarship grouping, as her work, especially on Cuban census data, insists upon the "diverse layers and sectors" of Cuban slavery, characteristics whose existence necessitates a closer examination of slavery outside of the sugar mill complex. Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," 67.

coffee economy. In this work, Van Norman argues against the claim that "life and labor on sugar plantations was either representative or the most important type of experience of all agricultural slaves."[21] By distinguishing between the different labor organization and cultivation requirements of coffee and sugar, Van Norman emphasizes the impact of substantially different work regimes upon the slave experience, ultimately concluding that the lives of slaves on Cuban coffee estates were fundamentally different than those of slaves on sugar plantations.[22]

For the most part, this reevaluation of Cuban slavery to account for non-sugar-based slaves has not yet addressed tobacco. As Matt Childs and Manuel Barcia argue in their 2010 overview of Cuban slavery, tobacco production has "yet to receive the same detailed scholarly treatment as Cuban sugar."[23] This is despite the fact that tobacco in the nineteenth-century was Cuba's second most important economy, leaving Childs and Barcia to argue that tobacco "calls out for more detailed scholarly analysis."[24] Childs and Barcia are correct; the dearth of scholarship on this subject is conspicuous as there has yet to be written a single work devoted exclusively to Cuban tobacco slavery in the nineteenth century. There are, however, a handful of studies that concentrate on various components of tobacco production in Cuba and these studies constitute the beginnings of a Cuban slave-based tobacco historiography.

These studies include early work by Francisco Arrango y Parreño and more recent works by Louis Pérez, Gloria Garcia, Orestes Gárciga, and Vicent Sanz Rozalén. And

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[21] William C. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790--1845" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), 4.
[22] It should be noted that my work is heavily influenced by Van Norman's groundbreaking analysis and approach as applied to slave systems outside of sugar.
[23] Matt D. Childs and Manuel Barcia, "Cuba," in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas* (OUP Oxford, 2010), 99.
[24] Ibid.

although these scholars do not focus primarily on tobacco slavery, they remain noteworthy for their exceptional and novel treatment of tobacco-based slavery. Arango is the rare exception to the exclusive focus on sugar that characterizes most of the literature of the nineteenth century. As one of Cuba's leading intellectuals, Arango was also one of the first advocates for a diversified Cuban plantation economy. Arango placed sugar firmly in the middle of the island's agricultural production, but he also insisted upon the value of both coffee and tobacco. Arango asserted that because slaves were a critical component of tobacco cultivation, tobacco in particular was well-positioned to take advantage of Cuba's continued reliance on enslaved labor. Moreover, Arango's contention that the Cuban tobacco industry employed slaves directly refuted the claims of other writers during this period.[25] Arango's singularity underscores the lack of scholarly acceptance for the use of slaves in tobacco, even in a period when the number of slaves involved in this economy numbered in the thousands. Arango's argument would prove to be exceptional not only for his generation, but for the following ones as well, as the larger scholarship's focus on sugar effectively marginalized any discussion of tobacco-based slavery in Cuba.

The treatment of tobacco slavery would eventually change, although this change has only recently begun and for the most part remains undeveloped. Among the important arguments on this subject is Pérez's recent study of a series of hurricanes in the 1840s that severely affected Cuba's agricultural and export-based economies. As the Vuelta Abajo suffered widespread destruction from this succession of hurricanes, Pérez argues that while tobacco crops initially suffered; "over the longer run, however, tobacco

[25] Francisco Arango y Parreño, *Obras Del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño.*, vol. 2 (Habana: Howson y Heinen, 1888), 541.

benefited" because of the hurricanes annihilation of the region's competing coffee economy. In some cases, Pérez contends, "producers converted defunct coffee estates into large vegas," or tobacco estates, while also "reallocating slave labor to tobacco production."[26] Garcia and Gárciga extend Pérez's timeline for the expansion of tobacco-based slavery back into the 1830s as these authors argue that tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo included the use of slaves alongside free workers.[27] Similarly, Vicent Sanz Rozalén argues that the presence of slaves in Cuban vegas was "a reality very widespread"—so much so that this economy employed an "outstanding amount of slaves" during the end of the eighteenth century and continuing through the beginning of the nineteenth century.[28]

Although not as recent, the work of the Cuban scholar Levi Marrero also belongs in this category. With a broad, but at times penetrating stroke, Marrero touches upon many central components of the tobacco-slave experience in Cuba. He points out that slaves were used early on in Cuban agriculture, and that with the help of the Spanish Crown, Cuban tobacco planters gained access to new African laborers as a means to

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[26] Louis A Pérez, *Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 94–95. A more in-depth discussion of both the 1840s hurricanes and Pérez follows in chapter three.

[27] García and Gárciga, "El Inicio de La Crisis de La Economía Esclavista," 377. In other works, García has valuable things to say about the existence and nature of slavery in tobacco cultivation. García argues that while tobacco estates initially were able to resist the use of slaves, "in successive years they succumbed almost totally to an avalanche" of slave-based labor. Gloria García, "Esclavos Estancieros Versus Trabajo Libre En La Habana (1760-1800)," in *Trabajo Libre y Coactivo En Sociedades de Plantación*, ed. José Antonio Piqueras (Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2009), 149. For a discussion of the diverse nature of tobacco cultivators, especially the coexistence of free workers and slaves on the same vegas, see Gloria García, "El Auge de La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 1994, 236.

[28] This historian locates the failure of the historiography to address this reality as a reflection of "inertia" rather than as representing historical fact. Vicent Sanz Rozalén, "Los Negros Del Rey. Tabaco Y Esclavitude En Cuba A Comienzos Del Siglo XIX," in *Trabajo Libre y Coactivo En Sociedades de Plantación*, ed. José Antonio Piqueras (Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2009), 152.

stimulate what was becoming the most productive and valuable branch of the island's economy. Marrero argues that this economy eventually attracted the interest of wealthy farmers, "which intensified the employment of slaves" on Cuban tobacco estates and eroded the traditional preconceptions that slaveholders had been using to dispute the practicality of used enslaved laborers to cultivate tobacco.[29]

The nascent literature on Cuban tobacco slavery includes the work of Jean Stubbs, Joan Cassanovas, and most recently, Charlotte Cosner. These scholars offer general analyses of the Cuban tobacco economy before, during, and after the nineteenth century. While they do not focus specifically on slavery, they do include slavery as part of their broader discussions of Cuba's tobacco economy. Writing in the 1980s, Jean Stubbs's pioneering work on Cuban tobacco was one of the few works of this period to address any aspect of tobacco's role in Cuban history. Her discussion of tobacco labor focuses on the urban sector in the twentieth century, but her work provides important background to this dissertation's arguments as she not only emphasizes the importance of tobacco to Cuba's economy in the nineteenth century but insists that slave labor was a central feature of tobacco cultivation. In addition to contending that the tobacco industry incorporated slave labor from its beginnings, Stubbs presents tobacco as was one of the few industries that could employ women and children as well as both slave and free labor throughout production.[30] Stubbs's work adds to the understanding of labor diversity in Cuba's plantation economy, and her sense of the "complexity" of tobacco labor underlines one fissure in the monolithic depiction of Cuban slavery based upon sugar labor. Joan Casanovas's analysis of urban tobacco laborers also contributes to recent

[29] Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, vol. 11 (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 58.
[30] Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 53, 65.

efforts to comprehend the full dimensions of Cuban slavery, especially those that fall outside the realm of sugar. Although Casanovas is primarily concerned with urban slavery, rather than the rural slaves who cultivated raw tobacco, her explicit rejection of the sugar model for understanding Cuban slavery along with a definitive statement on the importance of slaves cultivating tobacco mark her work as critical component in scholarship related to the agricultural production of tobacco by enslaved labor.[31]

Charlotte Cosner offers the most recent and detailed study of Cuban tobacco slaves to date. Although the topic of tobacco slavery does not constitute a significant proportion of her work; her work unequivocally recognizes the reality of tobacco-based slaves and in the process adds significantly to our knowledge about tobacco slavery, especially between 1763 and 1817. This perspective represents a radical shift in the historiography as Cosner insists that slaves played a substantial role in Cuban tobacco cultivation, going so far as to label this class the "lost historical vegueros," or Cuban tobacco farmers. Later chapters will discuss Cosner's work in more detail but arguably Cosner has established the historiographical baseline for accepting and understanding the role of slaves in Cuba's tobacco fields.[32]

Overall, both past and present literature on Cuban slavery has made the sugar experience its central focus. This overemphasis on sugar has created a situation analogous to one that Phillip Morgan described in reference to American slave studies: "Too often in history one South has served as proxy for many Souths."[33] The existence of

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[31] Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 6.

[32] Charlotte Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave: The Social History of Cuba's Tobacco Farmers, 1763--1817" (Florida International University, 2008).

[33] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), xvii.

tens of thousands of tobacco slaves suggests its importance as a component of Cuban slavery. But more significantly, the economic system of tobacco was fundamentally different from that of sugar. Tobacco, then, is not just another segment or an additional layer to add to the narrative about Cuban slavery. Rather, an understanding of tobacco slavery changes our understanding of nineteenth-century Cuban slavery more broadly.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

In nineteenth-century Pinar del Río, tobacco represented a sizable slave economy. Tobacco was Cuba's first mono-crop and arguably its second leading financial system. It also represented a sizable slave community: it concentrated tens of thousands of slaves in one area. Despite this, its coexistence alongside sugar effectively marginalized both contemporary and modern investigations into the institution of slavery. As a result, few sources directly address Cuban tobacco slavery, especially in comparison with the wealth of resources on Cuban sugar slavery. As a means of addressing this problem, this work employs sources that offer broad overviews; it also offers in-depth analysis of all instances in which Cuban tobacco slavery enters into the historical record. The result is both a micro-level study of tobacco slavery in Pinar del Río and a macro-level study of Cuban slavery in the nineteenth century. At the center of my research are hundreds of judicial proceedings that took place in the provincial jurisdiction of Pinar del Río. These include criminal trials, civil suits, and estate records that combine both master and slave testimony.[34] Additional sources augment my description of Cuban tobacco slavery, including a comprehensive analysis of all nineteenth century census records, both official and unofficial, as well as a variety of economic reports, originating from Cuba and

[34] This archive has been severally understudied as currently, only a handful of scholars have used these records to evaluate Cuban slavery, most notably Manuel Barcia.

elsewhere, that detail the economic scale of Cuban tobacco slavery in this period. In addition, this study incorporate an exhaustive rendering of both industrial manuals devoted to tobacco-based slavery in this period, as well as all accounts of tobacco slavery from contemporary travelers to Cuba from the United States, England, Spain, Sweden, and Russia.[35]

This dissertation offers a structural analysis that emphasizes the determinative role that tobacco and its associated work requirements had in shaping the contours of slave labor and life. I argue that the specific crop requirements of tobacco dictated unique labor-organization and work patterns that determined much of the slave experience. This argument draws on theoretical works that address the impact of crop specificity on labor organization; it also draws on comparative frameworks of slave systems throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic world, particularly emphasizing tobacco-based slavery in the United States and sugar and coffee slavery in Cuba. The comparison with other slave-based agricultural economies demonstrates the structural importance of crop specificity while distinguishing tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río from the general institution of slavery in Cuba and elsewhere.

The material lives of Cuban tobacco slaves were also structured by crop specificity. Patterns of family formation, forms of housing, degrees of independent staple and surplus production, spaces of autonomy, and opportunities for outright freedom were all dependent upon the type of agricultural labor regime that slaves found themselves living under. In evaluating the impact of tobacco upon Cuban slaves, this dissertation uses a variety of demographic data to quantify critical distinctions between the slave

[35] Among these travel writings are the only account of a foreign writer visiting a tobacco estate populated by slaves, as well as the only account of slaves independently growing tobacco for profit. Up to this point, no other scholars have used these sources.

community in Pinar del Río and other slave economies and areas in Cuba. Additionally, archeological and anthropological frameworks are employed as a means to understanding slave life and the material culture of the slave community. These sources are particularly helpful in the context of Cuban tobacco slavery, as there are neither plantation diaries, account books, nor even first-hand slave narratives that testify to the life experience of slaves on Cuban vegas.

This dissertation also focuses on a specific geographic region and during a specific chronological period. A principal argument of this dissertation is that the significance of tobacco slavery in Cuba is clearer when seen in the context of nineteenth-century Pinar del Río. Traditionally, historians depict the Cuban plantation economy as a continuous expansion of the sugar industry with this economy spreading to all parts of Cuba and in the process absorbing more land, labor, and other resources than all other slave-based agricultural pursuits. Yet, this was not the case in Pinar del Río: in this region alone, sugar had very little impact.[36] The land and climate of the Vuelta Abajo not only ensured the profitability of the tobacco economy, but also prevented viable sugar production. This created a phenomenon that was unique in Cuba: a singular area, enterprise, and society devoted to a slave-based economy that was independent from sugar. This region and this time period are of particular importance in the study of tobacco based-slavery, because it is in the Vuelta Abajo and in the midst of the last era of Cuban slavery that tobacco cultivation took on the characteristics of plantation-style production. As Cuba's plantation economy expanded over the course of the nineteenth century, Pinar del Río's tobacco planters used increasing numbers of slaves on

[36] In 1862, there were only five sugar plantations in Pinar del Río, out of 1,253 total estates in the western half of the island, leaving the number of sugar estates in Pinar del Río at just .4 percent of the total western area. Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 133.

increasingly large tobacco estates. In this region and in this period, tobacco cultivation not only employed slave labor, but did so on a plantation-sized scale.

CHAPTER LAYOUT

In the study of Cuba's tobacco economy, chapter two argues that slaves were an essential component of tobacco cultivation in Cuba. The tobacco industry used slaves from the beginning of Cuban slavery, and its use of slaves expanded over the course of the nineteenth century. This was especially true in Pinar del Río, where, contrary to traditional understanding, the use of slaves in tobacco cultivation was not subsumed in the wake of sugar's dominance. In fact, slave-based tobacco cultivation not only continued to develop alongside sugar, but also remained a vital component of Cuba's plantation economy. This chapter presents a chronology of Cuban tobacco slavery that starts with the initial Atlantic slave trade and ends in 1886 with Cuba's abolition of slavery. The chapter focuses on nineteenth century Pinar del Río, where the use of slaves was not only prolific, but also particularly privileged. Ultimately, this chapter argues slaves represented nearly three-quarters of all tobacco workers, with some areas averaging nine slaves out of every ten tobacco laborers. Moreover, this chapter concludes that tobacco estate owners in Pinar del Río valued and relied upon slave labor so much that they made significant attempts to retain a slave population, often surpassing similar efforts made by plantation owners in comparable economies elsewhere on the island.

Building upon the previous chapter's detailing of the widespread use and importance of slaves in Cuba's tobacco economy and from a foundation predicated upon crop specificity chapter three argues that crop specificity is the primary structuring element of enslavement. The unique labor requirements and work routines of tobacco determined the parameters of the laboring lives of nineteenth-century Pinar del Río's

slaves. How these slaves labored, when they labored, and where they labored were all directly related to the dictates of tobacco cultivation as practiced in this region and during this time period. This chapter emphasizes the uniqueness of tobacco cultivation by slave labor in Pinar del Río; this economic system's most distinctive feature was large-scale estates worked by significant slave populations. This labor organization differed greatly from tobacco production elsewhere in Cuba, while more closely resembling that of Cuba's other plantation economies. Tobacco made the labor lives of slaves in Pinar del Río unique in comparison to other slave systems in Cuba. Specifically, the labor structure of tobacco cultivation required significantly less time and energy than the extremes required by sugar. As a result, a distinct picture of Cuban slavery emerges: the large-scale cultivation of tobacco in Pinar del Río by slaves diverged significantly from both small-scale, family-based tobacco cultivation and the severe labor requirements of sugar production.

Chapter four continues the discussion of how different types of labor profoundly affected the different environments of Cuba's slave communities. This chapter analyzes the material conditions of slaves in Pinar del Río. It argues that the structure of labor associated with tobacco cultivation largely determined this slave community's demographic balance as well as patterns of family formation, housing, and mobility. Because tobacco's work requirements were marginal relative to other slave-based agricultural economies, a wide variety of laborers could be employed, including women, children, and the elderly. Compared with slave communities on sugar plantations, slave populations on tobacco estates in Pinar del Río had relatively higher life expectancy and a lower death rate, a greater gender balance, increased rates of reproduction, and more opportunities for family formation. The demography of tobacco cultivation also

influenced the type of housing that slaves lived in and the degree of mobility associated with these housing arrangements. Specifically, slaves in this area were housed in smaller, independent, hut-style accommodations that permitted relatively ungoverned movement, in contrast to the larger, barrack-style slave housing units on sugar plantations. All of these characteristics contributed to a radically different experience for the tens of thousands of slaves laboring in tobacco cultivation, compared with the experiences of slaves on Cuban sugar plantations and to a lesser degree, Cuba's coffee estates.

Tobacco cultivation as practiced in Pinar del Río facilitated additional benefits for slaves that were not as readily available in other agricultural pursuits. Chapter five argues that the most important of these benefits were slave-generated provision plots, *conucos.* The viability of conucos depended on the unique characteristics of tobacco production, its seasonal nature, its work requirements, and economic conditions related to the allocation of land and resources. The independent cultivation of both subsistence and surplus staples on Cuban vegas allowed slaves to transition from an imposed identity as laborers to self-assigned roles as economic actors. Through the informal economy originating in conuco production, tobacco slaves took advantage of their own industriousness to become not just producers but marketers and consumers as well. The structural framework of tobacco cultivation enabled an enhanced use of provision plots and new economic identities. Moreover, tobacco's status as a cash crop with minimal overhead and work requirements further enabled tobacco slaves to independently grow this crop to obtain material goods, including money that they used to initiate the process of *coartación*, or self-purchase. This chapter concludes that slaves in Pinar del Río possessed greater economic autonomy than slaves in other regions and that this material wealth translated into more avenues of freedom for tobacco-based slaves in Cuba.

Chapter 2: Cuban Tobacco Slavery

"It is certain that there are tobacco estates served only by whites; but most are cultivated by blacks, governed by a white."[37]

"Tobacco is cultivated almost entirely by whites and free blacks." [38]

INTRODUCTION

According to Alexander von Humboldt, Cuba's tobacco estates were exclusively cultivated by free laborers. Responding directly to Humboldt's claim Francisco Arango y Parreño refuted this notion, unequivocally arguing that the majority of Cuban vegas employed slave labor. As evidenced from these contemporary but conflicting accounts of the roles slaves played in tobacco cultivation, the association of slave labor with tobacco production in Cuba has suffered from a lack of consensus amongst scholars over time. Over the course of the scholarship misconceptions have downplayed slavery's longstanding, critical and continually expanding link to Cuba's tobacco economy. In reality, the connection between tobacco and slavery in Cuba was strong throughout the course of Cuban slavery. In the beginning of Cuban slavery, the importance of this connection was profound, since tobacco served as the principal medium of exchange within Cuba's nascent African slave trade. The link between Cuban slavery and tobacco would continue across centuries as thousands of slaves were increasingly forced to labor upon tobacco estates. This trajectory of slave-based growth eventually produced an enhanced reliance on slavery within the tobacco economy that was most pronounced at

[37]The original quote is: "Es cierto que hay vegas de tabacos servidas sólo por blancos; pero las más se cultivan por negros, gobernados por algún blanco." Francisco Arango y Parreño, *Obras Del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño.*, vol. 2 (Habana: Howson y Heinen, 1888), 541.

[38] Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 168.

the conclusion of Cuba's plantation-based economy in the 1880s. This was especially true in Pinar del Río, as Cuban tobacco planters in this central tobacco area held onto their slaves during these last years at not only a higher rate than previously imagined, but also at a rate that favorably compared to their sugar counterparts elsewhere on the island.

This chapter highlights several critical factors that help explain the development of tobacco-based slavery including the end of the state monopoly on tobacco production in 1817 and a series of hurricanes in the 1840s that led to the demise of coffee production in western Cuba and the expansion of tobacco in the same region. Additionally, this chapter addresses a succession of abolition efforts, slave rebellions, and disease epidemics, each of which decreased the availability of slaves, forcing a concentration of Cuba's slaves among the more viable economies such as tobacco. The direct result of these influences was a conspicuous expansion of slavery in Cuba's tobacco economy—most notably, an aggrandizement of farms and slave populations on individual estates. Although this enlargement was most prominent in Pinar del Río during the last half of the nineteenth century, its development built upon earlier foundations that took shape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that would continue to structure Cuba's tobacco economy until the end of slavery on the island.

CONNECTING TOBACCO AND SLAVERY

To understand the breadth of Cuban tobacco slavery and the degree to which the historiography has marginalized the role of tobacco-based slaves in Cuba's plantation economy, it is necessary to begin at the origins of African slavery in Cuba. It is impossible to overstate the economic and political value of Cuban tobacco in the Atlantic world in this early period. Internationally, the Cuban crop, as a principal medium of exchange, drove trade into and out of Cuba and among competing empires. A central

component of this trade involved African slavery and in Cuba, tobacco, not sugar, was the initial and definitive link to the institution of slavery. While the existence of slaves in tobacco cultivation is not a revelation, this fact establishes the early connection between tobacco and the institution of slavery in Cuba. And as this connection deepened over the following centuries, intensifying in the nineteenth century, it would serve as the defining feature of Cuba's tobacco economy.

The relationship between slavery and tobacco began in the earliest phases of the Spanish conquest of Cuba, as noted by the contemporary traveler David Turnbull. Turnbull not only argued for the use of slave-based labor in this economy and during this period, but also suggested that the Spanish had turned to the African slave trade as a means of replenishing their supply of laborers once they had decimated the indigenous population.[39] Citing official attempts in 1580 to increase tobacco's production through the establishment of a dedicated and expanded labor force, Richard Kimball writing in the nineteenth century, also maintained that tobacco acted as an early catalyst for the African slave trade to the island.[40] Additionally, in what is perhaps the only surviving account written in English of a visit to a tobacco slave plantation in Cuba, Byron Andrews argued that the number of imported Africans "was not very great until after the cultivation of sugar and tobacco was started, about the beginning of the 17th century."[41]

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[39] David Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 484.

[40] Richard Burleigh Kimball, *Cuba, and the Cubans: Comprising a History of the Island of Cuba, Its Present Social, Political, and Domestic Condition: Also, Its Relation to England and the United States,* (S. Hueston, 1850), 13. The intial connection between slavery and tobacco can be traced to at least 1595, when Portuguese trader Pedró Gómez Reynel promised to bring one thousand slaves into Cuba; he was paid mostly from the island's tobacco. Mercedes García Rodríguez, *La Aventura De Fundar Ingenios: La Refacción Azucarera En La Habana Del Siglo XVIII* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2004), 28. García Rodríguez also notes that the majority of slaves acquired early on were "put directly" to work in Cuba's tobacco fields, which suggests that slave labor was widely used in tobacco cultivation from the very beginning. Ibid, 27.

[41] Byron Andrews, *The Story of Cuba* (Washington: National Tribune, 1896), 13.

A contemporary of Turnbull, Andrews and Taylor, Pedro José Guiteras similarly claimed that Havana's early inhabitants had, by the late 1600s, "already begun to dedicate themselves to the cultivation of tobacco and sugar with the help of slaves."[42]

The relationship between tobacco and Cuban slavery continued into the eighteenth century as the two interrelated institutions simultaneously expanded. According to the early Cuban nationalist Francisco Arango y Parreño, it was tobacco that generated slavery on the island. Arango stated that during the Spanish wars of succession the French visited Havana to exchange slaves for tobacco, awakening the slave industry in Cuba.[43] In this same period, Hubert H.S. Aimes also asserted that the French came to Cuba "chiefly" for the island's tobacco, giving the tobacco industry its "first great impulse," and most importantly, facilitating Havana's ability to buy slaves. [44] Tobacco's connection to French slave trading becomes even more explicit with Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez's claim that the French were dealing directly with tobacco farms or estate

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[42] Pedro José Guiteras, *Historia de la isla de Cuba: con notas e ilustraciones* (J.R. Lockwood, 1865), 378. The link between Cuban tobacco and slavery in this early period can also be seen in the use and marketing of tobacco by slaves, which was intimately connected to the early economic and social history of Havana. Havana slaves were largely responsible for the considerable trade in tobacco, growing the plant on their individual plots and selling it as part of the trade that accompanied the Spanish fleet system during the sixteenth century. Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 57–58; Diana Iznaga, *La Burguesía Esclavista Cubana*, Historia de Cuba (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1987), 64.

[43] Arango y Parreño, *Obras Del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño.*, 2:243. Arango specifically mentioned the French trader Mr. Conchee, who operated in this period with great openness and frankness in exchanging Africans for all different types of tobacco. Francisco Arango y Parreño, *Obras del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño*, vol. 1 (Impr. de Howson y Heinen, 1888), 500. In an interesting twist, the shared connections of tobacco and the African slave trade of the intial journeys would be repeated and bookended as the some of the last known slaves to arrive in Cuba from Africa in the late 1860s landed in the two principal tobacco jurisdictions of the Vuelta Abajo: Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal. For an overview of this, see Giovannetti, Jorge L. and Camillia Cowling, "Hard Work with the Mare Magnum of the Past: Nineteenth-Century Cuban History and the Miscelánea de Expedientes Collection," *Cuban Studies* 39 (2008): 65. For the last voyages of arriving Africans into Cuba, see Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom*, Updated ed., 1st Da Capo Press ed (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 235–236.

[44] Hubert H. S Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), 21.

owners and that this initiation of a viable slave trade (based upon the exchange of tobacco) was the most significant general economic development of the colonial period.[45]

Beginning in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the importance of the slave trade forced the Spanish crown to grant a monopoly, the *asiento*, to foreign merchants—first the French and later the English—in an effort to guarantee access to slaves for Cuban planters.[46] In addition to the French preoccupation with Cuban tobacco the historian Julio Le Riverend notes that when granted the right to import slaves, the English as well did not chose sugar as the principal method of payment. Instead, they chose to be paid in tobacco and other Cuban products that they could not get elsewhere.[47] The contemporary historian José Antonio Saco added that these slave traders chose to be paid in tobacco in part because at that point, tobacco was considered Cuba's most important and productive crop.[48] Saco ultimately concluded that by mid-eighteenth

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[45] Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez et al., eds., *A History of the Cuban Nation* (La Habana: Editorial Historia de la Nación Cubana, S.A, 1958), vol 2 pg. 247, 281. Much of this was occurring outside of official channels: in this early period, the "principal contraband import items were slaves," while tobacco was one of the island's chief contraband exports. John Robert McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 200. Aimes says that from the early 1700s, English smuggling was "centered around" importing slaves and exporting tobacco. Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, 22.

[46] For a good overview of the eighteenth-century Cuban slave trade, including imperial relations structuring the trade, as well as the use of tobacco as a principal method of payment, Gloria García Rodríguez, "El Monte de La Trata Hacia Cuba En El Siglo XVIII," in *Cuba, La Perla De Las Antillas: Actas De Las I Jornadas Sobre "Cuba Y Su Historia,"* ed. Consuelo Naranjo Orovio and Tomás Mallo Gutiérrez (Madrid: Doce Calles, 1994), 297–311. See, also Jose Guadalupe Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844" (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007).

[47] Julio Le Riverend, *Economic History of Cuba* (Ensayo Book Institute, 1967), 1:149.

[48] Illustrative of tobacco's economic viability, Saco cites a Real Cédula of the period that explained tobacco's importance in the context of the current state of the sugar economy: despite the growth of the slave trade, many sugar manufactures were "almost entirely" abandoning their crop as they were unable to realize its value because of the considerable expense of harvesting the crop and the machines that manufactured the final product. José Antonio Saco, *Historia de La Esclavitud de La Raza Africana En El Nuevo Mundo y En Especial En Los Países Americo-hispanos,*, vol. 1 (Habana: Cultural s.a., 1938), 312. Additionally, Aimes argues "the manufacturing of sugar had practically ceased in Cuba at this time." Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, 24.

century the association of slavery with tobacco had encouraged the development of this agricultural pursuit which seemed well-suited to forced labor.[49]

These accounts reflect early international preference for tobacco and the resulting practice of exchanging slaves for tobacco which led to the "golden age of the tobacco trade"—an expansion of the Cuban tobacco industry, which grew to meet new levels of demand.[50] As a result, the expanding tobacco industry formed one half of a cycle that included the subsequent incorporation of newly arriving slaves who had been imported to increase the supply of this valuable product.

THE ROYAL MONOPOLY ON TOBACCO: THE FACTORÍA SYSTEM

Over the next century, as Spain increasingly sought ways to compete with its imperial rivals in the Atlantic economy, it progressively turned toward tobacco production in Cuba as the primary means to enlarge the royal treasury. The emphasis on tobacco resulted in the 1717 establishment of the *Factoría*, a monopolistic body empowered by the Spanish crown to purchase all available Cuban tobacco. While the Factoría, which continued to exist until 1817, produced uneven results for both Spanish officials and Cuban tobacco farmers, its importance to both parties was immense. For the crown, the monopoly protected one of its most valuable Atlantic commodities to the degree that it was subsidized by another Atlantic resource, silver from New Spain (payments to the Factoría reaching as high as 400,000 pesos per year), which in turn was

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[49] Saco, *Historia de La Esclavitud de La Raza Africana En El Nuevo Mundo y En Especial En Los Países Americo-hispanos,*, 1:310–311. Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez also argues for the immediate use of slaves in sugar and tobacco plantations during this period, but it should be noted that he subsequently, and contradictorily, differentiates between arriving white immigrants and black slaves, with the former raising crops "such as tobacco" and the latter "herded in sugar mills." Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, vol. 2; 151.

[50] McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain*, 200.

paid out to tobacco producers in Cuba.[51] Beyond payments for outright crops harvested, Cuban tobacco farmers, *vegueros*, used this influx of resources for the explicit purchase of slaves in order to capitalize on the crown's growing demand for more tobacco.[52] At mid-century, the use of tobacco as a principal payment for slaves proved common enough that Don José Villanueva Pico, the head of a Havana society devoted to procuring more slaves for the city and its environs, presented to the Spanish king a contract to import 1,000 slaves or more as needed per year over a ten-year period. In exchange, the Spanish King ordered Villanueva to export all of the tobacco from the Factoría to Spain without shipping costs.[53]

Operating alongside the Factoría, in the 1740s, the *Real Compañía de Comercio de La Habana* (Royal Comercial Company of Havana) also tried to stimulate tobacco production by actively importing slaves for the direct purpose of tobacco production. As a state-sanctioned monopoly governing tobacco cultivation on the island, the company's official policy of selling slaves, often below standard prices at the crown's behest, and often in exchange for tobacco, contradicts an idealized perception of tobacco as wholly

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[51] For the wealth achieved under the official tobacco monopoly, from 1740-1760, it has been estimated that the Spanish crown realized up to a 600 percent return on investment of Cuban tobacco under this system, which was on par with any of Spain's other top revenue production centers, including precious metals mined from other parts of New Spain. Ibid., 161. Noting that the royal monopoly was established because "the trade in Havana leaf could provide the Crown with untold wealth," McNeill further argues that the annual profit from tobacco alone was sufficient to not only cover the cost of administering and defending Cuba, but also to finance the Crown's entire navy. Ibid., 118.

[52] For an excellent overview of both tobacco's imperial importance and the role of the Factoría in Cuba during this period see Charlotte Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave: The Social History of Cuba's Tobacco Farmers, 1763--1817" (Florida International University, 2008); Laura Náter, "The Spanish Empire and Cuban Tobacco During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Atlantic Economy During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, by Peter A Coclanis, 2005.

[53] Saco, *Historia de La Esclavitud de La Raza Africana En El Nuevo Mundo y En Especial En Los Países Americo-hispanos,*, 1:313. The exchange of tobacco for slaves would continue through the turn of the century and even in the midst of sugar's domination over Cuba's slave-based economy. Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 367.

unsuitable for slave-based labor. In fact, the demand for slaves to labor in tobacco cultivation was so high that it far outstripped the crown's capacity to supply them. In 1750, the crown authorized the *Real Compañía* to supply 500 slaves, at 300 pesos each, to farmers in Cuba. This amount proved insufficient for tobacco production as Cuban governor Francisco Caxigal de la Vega protested, arguing the area's vegueros "clambered" for more enslaved workers.[54] According to the historian Charlotte Cosner, two years later, Alonso Arcos y Moreno, the governor of the jurisdiction of Santiago de Cuba, wrote Caxigal to suggest that the introduction of more slaves would translate into a greater quantity of tobacco for the Spanish crown. Caxigal concurred, arguing that "the abundance of this fruit" was not possible to obtain without the use of slaves.[55] As long as it was profitable and operating within a slave-based society, Cuban tobacco was seen as an ideal partner for the growing institution of Cuban slavery on the island. On a local level, individual vegueros in the Vuelta Abajo clamored for more slaves, and on an imperial level, the Spanish crown mandated the use of slaves and promoted their use through the Factoría.

1763: ADVANCES IN THE FACTORÍA SYSTEM

The period of 1762-1763 proved to be a seminal moment in the history of Cuban slavery, as the English captured the city of Havana and over a period of eleven months imported several thousand slaves into Cuba with an ease that was striking in contrast to the struggles Spain faced. Perhaps more important than the approximately four thousand slaves brought in under the English flag was the impact that the invasion and the threat of future invasions had on the Spanish crown. This resulted in "Spain increasing slaves

[54] Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad* (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 7:68.
[55] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 87.

imports in order to guarantee Cuban loyalty," culminating in the free importation of slaves after 1789.[56] The historian Sherry Johnson characterizes this development as a "watershed" moment in Cuban history. She notes that several prominent Cuban scholars of the twentieth century, including Moreno Fraginals and Cepero Bonilla, have considered the end of trade restrictions, which resulted in the immediate introduction of thousands of slaves, as the beginning of the sugar industry and the corresponding plantation economy in Cuba.[57]

However, this periodization argument falls flat in view of the role that tobacco played in generating Cuba's first substantial imports of slaves. Humboldt claimed that sixty thousand slaves entered Cuba up through the year 1763, while Saco and others have insisted that the majority of these slaves were either bought with tobacco proceeds or exchanged directly for tobacco.[58] In fact, Aimes claims that the use of slaves in tobacco cultivation often occurred at the expense of sugar cultivation: in October 1747, 497 slaves from Jamaica arrived into Cuba, and although in great demand, this insufficient quantity, "could do little more than provide for the increased crops of tobacco," leaving sugar planters in this period to face "ruin on account of the lack of slaves."[59] Aimes highlights similar circumstances two decades later: noting a Havana official who wrote, "few

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[56] Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 24, 26.

[57] Sherry Johnson, *Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2011), 40; Sherry Johnson, *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 27. For sugar, see Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: Complejo Económico Social Cubano Del Azúcar*, Nuestra Historia (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978); Bonilla, Raúl Cepero, *Azúcar Y Abolición; Apuntes Para Una Historia Crítica Del Abolicionismo*, 2. ed. (Habana: Editorial Echevarría, 1960).

[58] Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 138; Saco, *Historia de La Esclavitud de La Raza Africana En El Nuevo Mundo y En Especial En Los Países Americo-hispanos,*, 1:1: 312; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 7: 58; Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, 23–24.

[59] Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, 25.

owners of the ingenios [sugar mills] have bought negroes" as they were largely unavailable to this nascent economy.[60] Even if Humboldt's numbers represent an overestimation of the number of slaves imported into Cuba by 1763, contemporary and historical evidence suggests that whatever the number was, the majority were more likely destined for tobacco farms rather than sugar plantations.[61]

This argument is given further credence by the direct provisioning of slaves to vegueros from the Factoría upon return of Havana to Spanish authority. This provisioning occurred immediately; in the initial aftermath of 1763 when the trade in African slaves was opened to an unprecedented degree, Humboldt noted that of the first imports, several thousand were supplied by the Compañía de Tabacos.[62] In 1764, Count de Ricla, the governor and Captain General of Cuba officially continued this Spanish policy of supplying slaves to Cuba's tobacco farmers through the Factoría, awarding 350 newly arriving slaves brought by the English factor Cornelio Coppinger to the vegueros of Guane (the municipality that would later be renamed Pinar del Río in 1774).[63] Bought at cost by the Factoría at an average price of 140 pesos, these slaves were in turn sold with a slight markup according to age and stoutness to vegas owners, who paid for the newly

[60] Ibid., 35. Johnson claims that after 1762 the majority of slaves "were absorbed by the fortification projects," a particular emphasis of Cuban and Spanish officials after the defeat of 1763. Johnson, *Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution*, 226 n. 216. A contrasting argument is presented by Ramiro Guerra. In Cuba's first two centuries, the crown sent from Mexico money directed to pay for the expenses associated with the defense of the island. However, in the eighteenth century, much of this allotment was used to purchase tobacco for the royal treasury. In fact, in 1734, 100,000 pesos were appropriated for payment to the garrison in Havana for military expenses, while double that amount was used to buy tobacco. The unbalanced payments would continue as seen in 1755 when tobacco accounted for 56 percent of the allocated money, thereby demonstrating just how much significance the crown placed upon this crop. Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, 2: 291–92.

[61] Matt Childs, puts the estimate of slaves inported tby England at closer to 40,000. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery*, 24.

[62] Humboldt estimates that the Compañía de Tabacos distbuted 4,957 slaves from 1763 to 1766. Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 138.

[63] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 58.

acquired slaves in tobacco.[64] Levi Marrero underscores the value of these slaves to both the crown, who would receive the tobacco from their labor, and the vegueros, who would benefit from the payment of their tobacco by the official Factoría. Marrero contends that in the later stages of the eighteenth century, tobacco slaves were considered to be more productive than those destined for the sugar mills of the same period.[65] The Factoría was so integral to procuring slaves directly for Cuba's tobacco famers that, as Laura Náter points out, it "was the principal resource to please the *vegueros*."[66]

In what is the most thorough account of the agriculture production of Cuban tobacco in the eighteenth century, Charlotte Cosner labels tobacco slaves in Cuba as "the lost historical vegueros." This assessment is only partially correct as Cosner contends that although the historiography has consistently either ignored or marginalized the slave in Cuban tobacco cultivation, the existence of tobacco slaves was a longstanding reality.[67] Cosner addresses the presence of tobacco slaves while also attempting an initial correction to restore the slave veguero to the later periods of the eighteenth century. In doing so, Cosner adds to the numerous accounts of officials in both Cuba and in Spain discussing the state of the Cuban tobacco economy, its impact upon the royal treasury,

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[64] Marrero lists the following prices for the different slaves; 195 pesos for slaves younger than thirteen, 225 pesos for slaves age 13-18, and 249 pesos for slaves 18 or older. Ibid., 11:58.

[65] Marrero goes onto to cite additional examples of the *Factoría* subsidizing the acquisition of slaves by Cuban vegueros in this period as a means to stimulate tobacco production for the Spanish crown. Ibid., 11: 58. Turnbull noted that the reality of African slaves being brought to Cuba in exchange for tobacco continued as late as 1836. Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 367.

[66] This exchange was even more critical when regular payments of silver from New Spain were disrupted; these disruptions left the sale of slaves as the only form of compensation available to the Factoría during these periods. Náter, "The Spanish Empire and Cuban Tobacco During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 276 n. 64.

[67] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 86.

and the role that slavery played in this relationship.[68] According to Cosner, in 1764 in Santiago de Cuba, repeating an event that had occurred more than a decade earlier, Mateo Echavarria, the official in charge of the tobacco monopoly, petitioned for additional slaves to labor in tobacco cultivation. His request demonstrated the near insatiable and protracted demand for slaves as tobacco laborers across Cuba both before and immediately after 1763.[69] Similarly, a decade later in Bayamo, officials requested nearly seven hundred slaves to be used in tobacco production explaining that this would lead to "a significant increase in tobacco production."[70]

Yet, Spain proved unable to meet such a large demand, a situation that the Captain General of Cuba, Marqués de la Torre had recently complained about to officials in Spain.[71] Spain's inability to supply the number of slaves that Cuban vegueros desired was not an indication of the crown's disinterest, but rather a reflection of their limited role in the Atlantic commerce of African slavery amid the increasing demands of Cuba's vegueros. As a means to address this deficiency, in 1802, a functionary of the Factoría was ordered to meet the demand for slaves to labor on Cuba's vegas by organizing four

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[68] For another excellent treatment of this early stage of tobacco slavery and one that insists upon a more widespread than commonly accepted emphasis upon Spanish and Cuban officials directly supplying slaves to Cuban vegueros, see Vicent Sanz Rozalén, "Los Negros Del Rey. Tabaco Y Esclavitude En Cuba A Comienzos Del Siglo XIX," in *Trabajo Libre y Coactivo En Sociedades de Plantación*, ed. José Antonio Piqueras (Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2009), 151–176.

[69] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 87. In this same region in 1766, an official suggested that the average vega in the area employed enough slaves to warrant an overseer for the enslaved workers on the tobacco estates. Gloria García, "El Auge de La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 1994, 236.

[70] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 88.

[71] Ibid.

or five expeditions to Africa to purchase slaves and to distribute them among the vegueros at lower prices than those offered at the local slave market.[72]

In addition describing Spanish and Cuban official's sustained interest in tobacco slavery during the eighteenth century, Cosner details the practical application of this royal policy on a local level. She offers accounts of numerous successful requests by Cuban vegueros for slaves at a discounted price.[73] However, it is her analysis of the tobacco economy of Güines that demonstrates the extent to which policy and practice were put into place during this period. In data taken from the 1774 census of Güines, Cosner contrasts the 245 slaves of prime working age, fifteen to fifty, working on vegas with just fifty-eight of the same category assigned to the regions' ingenios, or sugar farms. This suggests that slaves represented a more significant proportion of the labor on tobacco farms than has traditionally been understood.[74] Additional data from the same year indicates that at least 17 percent of Pinar del Río's population was enslaved, but in the central tobacco-growing of the Vuelta Abajo, that number rises to 37 percent.[75] The extent of tobacco production by slaves in and near the Vuelta Abajo suggests both a larger economy and use of slave-based labor in tobacco cultivation than previously understood.[76]

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[72] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 59. Tobacco's influence often extended to even the highest levels of the empire, a reality evidenced by the personal oversight of King Carlos III in the granting of a number of slaves destined for the Cuban *Factoría*. Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 203–204.

[73] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 90–91.

[74] Ibid., 93.

[75] Gordon Inglis, "Historical Demography of Colonial Cuba, 1492-1780," 1979, 187, 189.

[76] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 215. Regarding the contrast of sugar with tobacco during this period, Moreno Fraginals argues "the bloodthirsty fury with which the nascent sugarocracy seized tobacco lands" was particularly noted in the "violent invasion of Güines." Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba, 1760-1860.* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 22, 66.

1789 – 1817: The Ending of Restrictions for Cuba's African Slave Trade and the Factoría System

As part of larger reforms throughout the Spanish empire in the second half of the eighteenth century, on February 28, 1789, all restrictions on the importation of Africans into Cuba were repealed. This was the centerpiece of Arango's calls for the liberalization of restrictions on Cuban trade, and it increased Cuban planters' ability to acquire more slaves from a variety of new sources and to purchase slaves without the burden of import duties or imposed prices. The result was an exponential increase in the agricultural export markets that would structure the island's economy for the next century. Although slavery had existed in Cuba for several centuries, it was only with the initiation of free trade in slaves that Cuba's defining institution did "fundamentally alter the social, racial and ethnic composition of the island."[77] The effect on the tobacco economy was transformative: the expansion and enlargement of both farms and slave populations began in this period.

For Cuba's slave society in general, the nineteenth century was defined by the unparalleled enlargement of the African slave trade: More than 85 percent of the one million estimated slaves brought to Cuba arrived after the initiation of free trade in 1789.[78] The extraordinary development of one of the Atlantic world's largest slave systems can be traced across five censuses commissioned by the Cuban government in the nineteenth century. In 1817, there were 199,145 slaves listed in Cuba — 36 percent of Cuba's total population.[79] In 1827, the listed population of slaves was 286,942,

[77] Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery*, 49.
[78] Ibid., 30.
[79] For the 1817 census and a valuable discussion of the merits and accuracy of all census published in the nineteenth century see, Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976).

representing 40 percent of the overall population.[80] In 1842, the number of slaves had risen significantly to 436,495 — the equivalent of 43 percent of Cuba's population.[81] In absolute numbers, this census year reflected the apogee of slavery in Cuba. The institution would not again equal these heights; although the decline would be gradual (the 1846 Cuban census listed 323,759 slaves, amounting to 36 percent of total population).[82] By 1862, the number of slaves had risen to 370,533, but at 28 percent, this was a significant reduction in terms of overall percentage of Cuba's population.[83]

The magnitude of these numbers, however, obscures the relationship between tobacco and slavery. A "problem" of recognizing tobacco-based slavery in Cuba and the myth-making in contemporary and historical renderings of the Cuban tobacco economy also originate in the dramatic accounts of sugar as the definitive location of Cuban slavery in the nineteenth century. This narrative suggests that a majority of Cuban slaves labored in what was a unique form of western enslavement whose severe characteristics seemed to merit an intense concentration of scholarship. This can be seen across some of the most recognized volumes where authors use sugar, in its generalized form, as the Cuban slave-institution model.[84] Even when attempts are made to present a more nuanced

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[80] Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...: Precedido de Una Descripción Histórica, Física, Geográfica y Acompañada de Cuantas Notas Son Conducentes Para La Ilustración Del Cuadro* (Imp. de Arazoza y Soler, 1829).

[81] Comision encargada del censo de, *Resumen Del Censo de Poblacion de La Isla de Cuba a Fin Del Año de 1841* (Imprenta del Gobierno por S.M., 1842).

[82] Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno y capitania general, 1847).

[83] José Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno, 1864).

[84] As just one example, Rebecca Scott, in what is arguably the most important synthesis of Cuban slavery and emancipation makes this connection indivisible, beginning with her introductory chapter titled "Sugar and Slavery." Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, New pbk. ed. (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985).

picture of Cuban slavery, they remain filtered through the lens of sugar slavery on the island.

The vast numbers of slaves arriving in the initial period of the amplified slave trade in the nineteenth century, however, strongly correlates with the ending of the Factoría system. As a monopolistic institution that inhibited the growth of slavery in Cuba's tobacco fields, its end, along with an unprecedented expansion of African slavery, suggests the extent to which imported slaves would eventually be forced to labor on Cuba's vegas. On June 23, 1817, the Cuban Factoría was abolished by royal decree as a result of internal pressures. These pressures included increasing unrest by vegueros upset over the monopolistic policies of the Factoría system; a failure to address the concerns of vegueros and Cuban officials regarding the use of slaves in tobacco cultivation; and general calls for liberalized trade and a greater economic diversity for the island by leading Cuban figures including Arango and institutions designed to promote local economic development such as the *Sociedad Patriótica de la Habana* and its later iteration, the *Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País*.[85]

The demise of the royal monopoly system in 1817 signaled the advent of another golden era of tobacco production in Cuba.[86] As witness to this, Ramón de le Sagra noted the sizeable difference in the production of tobacco during and after the monopoly, noting

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[85] Hereafter the [Real] Sociedad Patriótica de la Habana will be referred to as the Sociedad Patriótica and the [Real] Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, as the Sociedad Económica.

[86] Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15–16; Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 16–17; Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 224; Inés de Montaud, "Spanish Fiscal Policies and Cuban Tobacco During the Nineteenth Century," *Cuban Studies.* no. 33 (2002): 49. Náter argues that the effectiveness of the Factoría had ceased as early as 1810. Náter, "The Spanish Empire and Cuban Tobacco During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 273.

that total island production went from 371,560 arrobas in 1811 to 500,000 in 1827.[87] This expansion of tobacco production would continue throughout the nineteenth century. Official records described a 48 percent increase in raw tobacco exported from 1826 to 1831 and a 68 percent increase in manufactured tobacco exported during the same period.[88] Sagra also measured the expansion of the tobacco industry in total Cuban tobacco exports; noting that from 1826 to 1830, raw tobacco exports rose 102 percent and manufactured tobacco rose by 106 percent.[89] A comparison with sugar's growth during this period illuminates just how exceptional tobacco's growth was during this period. According to the Sociedad Patriótica in 1835, Cuba's tobacco exports saw a 96 percent increase over the past year, while sugar exports only increased 4 percent.[90] On a larger scale, from 1826 to 1859, tobacco exports grew by a factor of seven, while sugar exports tripled and coffee exports underwent a significant decrease.[91] Beginning with the end of the monopoly system, tobacco production underwent considerable and sustained expansion – above and beyond competing economies - and it is this development that allowed for a simultaneous increase in the use of slaves in the tobacco economy.

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[87] Note, one arroba equals approximately 25 pounds. Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba: Historia física y política. Introducción, Geografía, clima,población, Agricultura*, vol. 1 (Librería de Arthus Bertrand, 1842), 1: 289. For 1827 numbers broken down by exports in raw and manufactured tobacco, see Ramón de la Sagra, *Anales de ciencias, agricultura, comercio y artes* (Havana: Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía general, September 1827).

[88] *Balanza general del comercio de la Isla de Cuba en el año de 1826* (Havana: Of. del Gobierno, 1827); *Balanza general del comercio de la Isla de Cuba en el año de 1831* (Havana: la Real Hacienda, 1832).

[89] Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas* (Habana: Impr. de las viudas de Arazoza y Soler, 1831), 176.

[90] Tobacco went from 26,436 to 51,712; sugar, from 4,544,936 to 4,708,670. Numbers are in arrobas and for tobacco, only include raw tobacco. Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 3 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1837), 471.

[91] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863), 39.

The use of slaves on Cuba's vegas was augmented by another decree, the 1817 free-trade legislation, that allowed Cuban merchants to trade without penalty with any foreign countries. And despite increasing pressure from British abolitionists and their government, this relaxation of trade restrictions acted as a general catalyst throughout all of Cuba's economies by providing an extraordinary influx of arriving slaves. Beginning in 1816, an estimated 100,000 slaves were imported over a five-year period, representing a higher number "than were imported in the whole period before 1790."[92] More precisely, from 1790 to 1820, more than 300,000 slaves were imported into Cuba, with a third of those, 107,696, arriving between 1817 and 1820, and on the heels of the abolishment of the tobacco monopoly.[93]

The arrival of so many slaves just after the end of the Factoría alongside tonbacco's increasing economic development suggests a strong causal link, but the historical record makes it impossible to know exactly where or to what industry these 100,000 slaves were sent. In a state-sponsored report on the agricultural production of tobacco in the 1840s, Tomás de Salazar mentioned that very little detailed information has been written about tobacco to that point, which further limits the accounting of slaves dispersed to Pinar del Río.[94] Yet, the conditions of Cuba's tobacco economy, in light of the international demand for this crop and the precedent of slaves cultivating tobacco,

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[92] Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom*, 95.

[93] Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery*, 49; Barcia, María del Carmen, García, Gloria, and Torres-Cuevas, Eduardo, eds., *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (La Habana: Editora Política, 1994), 472–473.

[94] Thomas Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco* (Impr. del Gobierno y Capitanía General y Real Hacienda por S.M., 1850), 5. An author of a report on the cultivation of tobacco by the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País in 1839, similarly laments the fact there has been published "so little writings" and "not even one paltry primar" on this subject. Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 9 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 277–78.

were conducive to slavery's expansion in this region. Additionally, the deep-seated demand for slaves by vegueros throughout the Factoría period suggests that many of these slaves were bound for vegas in Cuba's primary tobacco region, Pinar del Río. International demand, local conditions, and veguero needs were not the only factors pulling slaves into tobacco production. Official policies also sought to actively encourage this relationship as Salazar argued, no plant produces more in proportion to the capital and labor employed than tobacco does.[95] Salazar, in this report, saw tobacco as a primary means to achieve prosperity and tranquility for the island; insisting that the use of slave labor increases the amount of raw tobacco cultivated by "half more."[96]

In this early period of the nineteenth century, the tobacco industry was well placed to expand its production by taking advantage of a renewed slave trade and increasing its already established reliance upon enslaved laborers. This was most notable in the province of Pinar del Río, a region whose exceptionality in the context of Atlantic tobacco production ensured that its growth would completely depend on the institutionalization of slavery.[97] It was in this period and region that the demography of tobacco cultivation underwent an important transformation. More slaves were being incorporated into the labor force, and as a result, the racial and class makeup of those involved in tobacco cultivation evolved to reflect a greater dependence upon slaves.

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[95] Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco*, 5.

[96] Salazar confirmed that six slaves were a typical workforce on vegas during the initial decades of the nineteenth century. Ibid., 53.

[97] Accordingly, Antonio Bachiller y Morales noted an "unimpeded" expansion of Cuban vegas in the area after 1817. Antonio Bachiller y Morales, *Prontuario de agricultura general: para el uso de los labradores i hacendados de la isla de Cuba* (Impr. de Barcina, 1856), 4.

THE VUELTA ABAJO IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Within Pinar del Río the increasing reliance upon enslaved labor for tobacco cultivation was especially prominent in the Vuelta Abajo region, an area roughly measuring at 97 miles wide by 24 miles long, where "the inhabitants of this jurisdiction are dedicated exclusively to the cultivation of tobacco."[98] From the Vuelta Abajo outward, tobacco so dominated the economic and social aspects of this region that the tobacco scholar Jean Stubbs argues during the nineteenth century, "virtually every man and woman, and many a child too, was involved in tobacco in that part of the country," while the Cuban historian Ramiro Guerra claims that the area of the Vuelta Abajo represented "a region where not even during the period of greatest activity would the sugar industry invade."[99]

The predominance and exclusivity of tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo marked this region as distinct. Not only was tobacco the singular crop in the region it was one of only a few geographic spaces that successfully prevented the encroachment of sugar, which would eventually invade most all other areas of the island. In terms of slavery, immediately after 1817, this area exclusively defined by tobacco production saw a higher degree of enslavement that corresponded to an overall expansion in this economy. In 1811, before the advent of free trade in tobacco, the population of the Vuelta Abajo was 62 percent white and 24 percent free black, leaving only 14 percent to be listed as slaves.[100] Yet in 1827, just a decade after the end of the monopoly, the number

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[98] Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...*, 54.
[99] Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*, 65–66; Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, 3: 161.
[100] The following discussion of the racial and class breakdown of the Vuelta Abajo comes from, Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:156.

of slaves in the area increased to 26 percent of the population.[101] This percentage still pales in comparison to the overall percentages of slaves in the primary sugar- and coffee-growing regions in central Cuba. However, the growth of the slave population in Pinar del Río between 1811 and 1827 was exceptional in that it was the only class in any region to significantly increase its percentage. A comparison of total demographic percentages with other economic areas illuminates the pronounced growth of tobacco slavery in Pinar del Río. While the ratio of whites and free blacks in the Vuelta Abajo diminished from their 1811 numbers to 50 percent and 22 percent, respectively, (a general decrease that was shared island-wide) the increase in percentage of the enslaved population in the Vuelta Abajo, however, was not matched in Cuba's central sugar- and coffee-producing zones such as Matanzas and Güines. In these zones, rather than match the 86 percent increase in the slave population of the Vuelta Abajo, the percentage of slaves in these areas either increased only slightly from 1811 levels or actually diminished.[102]

This growth of slavery in Pinar del Río after 1817 led to the creation of a sizeable tobacco-based slave population numbering in the tens of thousands.[103] However, more precise numbers can be deduced by examining the 1817 and 1827 Cuban censuses and by analyzing individual jurisdictions within the Vuelta Abajo in 1838. According to the 1817 census, Pinar del Río had 3,634 slaves, while in 1827, the number had escalated to

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[101] From the 1827 census the percentage of slaves in Pinar del Río equals, 26.6, while Emeterio Santovenia, citing José de Aguilar the provincial lieutenant governor of Filipina (the former jurisdiction of Pinar del Río) lists the slave population ratio of Pinar del Río at 27.9 percent in 1819. Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...*; Santovenia, Emeterio, *Pinar Del Río*, 1. ed. (México: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1946), 76.

[102] Slaves were 67 percent of the population of both Matanzas and Güines in 1811; in 1827, they were 68 percent in Matanzas and 63 percent in Güines. Sagra, *Historia fisica, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:156.

[103] Aimes argues that in this region there were 36,000 slaves divided among "minor estates such as tobacco farms, cattle ranches and farms." However, as will be demonstrated tobacco increasingly and overwhelmingly dominated the economy of this region. Aimes, *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, 100.

5,104. This represents a 40 percent increase of the slave population in a single decade.[104] Citing different sources, the historian Levi Marrero argues that in 1827, there were 6,854 slaves in the major tobacco areas of Pinar del Río province, resulting in a staggering 89 percent increase from 1817.[105] And although the total number of slaves in Pinar del Río in 1827 still fell well below that of other locales and industries across Cuba, the growth of this population was significant, as it either equaled or surpassed the 44 percent increase in the total slave population for Cuba in the same period.

As a whole, the increase in the number of slaves laboring on vegas throughout Cuba by 1827 is a reflection of the initial demand by vegueros in the wake of the monopoly's end. This demand began well before the limitations on productivity that followed the establishment of the monopoly, whose end in 1817 would only add to the call for more tobacco slaves as production levels increased. As tobacco evolved along with Cuba's burgeoning slave trade—especially in Pinar del Río—nascent patterns of development defined by meaningful increases in slave use were becoming established. These patterns would continue to structure the Cuban tobacco economy of the nineteenth century.

Partido	Ingenios	Cafetales	Potreros	Hacienda de crianzas	Vegas de tabaco	Grand Total
Consolación del Norte	0	0	0	166	75	241
San Diego de los Baños	36	50	46	68	630	830
Consolación del Sur	0	0	0	168	840	1,008
Pinar del Río	37	0	97	67	975	1,176
San Juan y Martínez	0	0	233	0	856	1,089
Baja	93	0	0	36	84	213
Guanes	0	0	77	28	216	321
Mantua	0	12	0	58	150	220
Grand Total	166	62	453	591	3,826	5,098

Table 1A: Vegas laborers: Vuelta Abajo, 1838, Slaves.

[104] For the 1817 census see, Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899*. For the 1827 census, Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...*
[105] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 59.

Partido	Ingenios	Cafetales	Potreros	Hacienda de crianzas	Vegas de tabaco	Grand Total
Consolación del Norte	0	0	0	33	21	54
San Diego de los Baños	3	6	22	39	750	820
Consolación del Sur	0	0	0	46	491	537
Pinar del Río	6	0	8	32	424	470
San Juan y Martínez	0	0	15	0	103	118
Baja	6	0	0	59	66	131
Guanes	0	0	16	48	150	214
Mantua	0	1	0	38	188	227
Grand Total	15	7	61	295	2,193	2,571

Table 1B: Vegas laborers: Vuelta Abajo, 1838, Free. [106]

Evidence of this slave-based progression in the tobacco economy can be found in an 1838 report commissioned by the Sociedad Patriótica. The report demonstrates the degree to which slave labor had penetrated Cuban tobacco farms as well as the magnitude of slave-based tobacco production in the Vuelta Abajo (Table 1A and Table 1B). In this examination of the racial and class makeup of vegas laborers in the eight *partidos*, or jurisdictions, composing the province of Pinar del Río, it is noted that three-quarters of all slaves in this region (3,826 out of 5,098) were devoted to tobacco production (Table 1A). Tobacco represented an overwhelming concentration of the region's slave population, with that community more than twenty-three times as large as tobacco's closest competitor in the use of slave labor in this region. Unequivocally, the primary occupation of slaves in Pinar del Río was cultivating tobacco. In addition to tobacco production having the largest allocation of slaves, slaves represented 64 percent of the total workforce (3,826 out of 6,019) involved in tobacco cultivation in this area (Table 1B).

[106] The following information comes from the Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 7 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1838), 72–73.

This indicates that the owners of these vegas predominantly relied upon enslaved labor to accomplish the majority of tobacco cultivation.[107]

A closer examination of the three largest *partidos* within Pinar del Río (according to the number of slaves listed on vegas) - Consolación del Sur, Pinar del Río, and San Juan y Martínez—demonstrates that in the area of the Vuelta Abajo where slave labor was most widespread, the use of slaves was particularly privileged. The percentage of slaves as part of the overall workforce for Consolación del Sur, Pinar del Río, and San Juan y Martínez were 63, 70, and 89 percent, respectively (Table 1B). At this point in Pinar del Río's history, in the first two decades after the 1817 end of the Factoría, almost three quarters of all tobacco workers were enslaved. Moreover, in the most prosperous areas of the Vuelta Abajo, the proportion could be almost as high as nine out of every ten workers—a level that would surpass even that of sugar production, elsewhere on the island, at its height.[108]

Based upon this prevailing use of slaves, their extensive numbers, and the dominant role they played in the tobacco economy, the expansion of tobacco-based

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[107] The author of this report qualifies his numbers by saying that the ratio of whites should be augmented, as the owners of the vegas were not listed, while for slaves a similar increase is suggested: "it is true that the real number of those that exist is not always manifested in the census by the well-known prevention of the owners." Ibid., 7:73.

[108] Bergad writes, "by the late 1870s slaves made up more than 70 percent of the total work force on Matanzas sugar estates." Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990), 155. Eduardo Torres-Cuevas has placed the percentage of enslaved workers on ingenios and cafetales as ranging from 58 - 67 percent of the region or estate population, in contrast to his figure of 14 percent for tobacco zones. Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "'La Sociedad Exclavista y Sus Contradicciones'," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, ed. María del Carmen Barcia, Gloria García, and Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (La Habana, 1994), 281.

slavery in the first half of the nineteenth century should have also resulted in a change in the historical and contemporary understanding of Cuba's tobacco economy. This was not the case in either period, however. In 1844, Spanish nobleman, politician, and estate owner Wenceslao Ramírez de Villa Urrutia wrote to Leopoldo O'Donnell, the Captain General of Cuba, and noted that of all of Cuba's agricultural pursuits, tobacco was the only one that did not need or use black or enslaved workers.[109] More recently and more emphatically, Franklin Knight suggests that "by the middle of the nineteenth century, tobacco-farming was an activity of free white and free colored people, with very little use of slave labor." Echoing Fernando Ortiz, Knight goes on to argue that "in reality, therefore, relatively few slaves participated in the delights of the vegas, compared to those on the sugar estates."[110] Spanning more than a century, these interpretations continue to distinguish tobacco and sugar by the use of slaves in one economy but not the other.

These assessments stand in stark contrast to reality. Multiple official reports and contemporary accounts reveal widespread use of slave labor in cultivating tobacco and an overwhelming concentration of a sizable slave population in the Vuelta Abajo. G. Casamayoux (owner of the vega *Arroyo-Hondo*) provides the most unequivocal statement of the Cuban tobacco planter regarding slave labor, insisting in 1850, that "in the cultivation of tobacco the slave does it all; planting, removes worms, prunes, cleans the

[109] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 59.
[110] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 65.

trunks, cuts the leaves, hangs, presses and bundles the tobacco."[111] Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, the foremost nineteenth-century Cuban authority on tobacco cultivation, also testified to the use of slave labor on vegas, citing 1841 figures that listed 23,080 white vegueros and 10,377 free blacks and slaves devoted to tobacco.[112] Moreover, according to Rodríguez-Ferrer, as the use of slave labor became more pronounced the tobacco industry was divesting itself of the exclusively white and freely cultivated label, a result of fundamental changes in the demographic makeup of the crop's labor force in Cuba's emerging plantation economy.

Historian Levi Marrero offers one of the few historical assessments to mirror Rodríguez-Ferrer and Casamayoux by addressing the continued development of slavery in Cuba's tobacco economy. Marrero points out (what is for him) a radical change in the use of slaves near the midpoint of the nineteenth century. In previous work, Marrero argued that tobacco was cultivated by free whites and their immediate families, characterizing the cultivation of tobacco as "intrinsically alien" to slave labor.[113] Yet Marrero would later determine that the economic expansion of tobacco during the nineteenth century gradually transformed its slave industry from a few slaves on vegas into small *dotaciones*, estate level slave populations or workgroups, on increasingly profitable and larger farms.[114] Marrero notes that the inclusion of forced labor on a

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[111] Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...* (Madrid: Colegio national de Sordo-Mudos, 1851), 111.
[112] Ibid., 146.
[113] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 63.
[114] Marrero recognizes an important change in 1841, when the Real Compañía de Comercio de La Habana, pushed by rising demand from Europe, facilitated an unprecedented augmentation of the slave work force in cultivating tobacco

significant scale for tobacco can be traced back to the end of the monopoly in 1817, which prompted the larger owners and the ones with more resources to employ slave labor, while concluding that a fundamental shift in the demographic makeup of Cuba's vegas workforce would continue throughout the remainder of Cuban slavery in the nineteenth century.[115]

Between one position characterizing tobacco cultivation as innately white and another insisting on the essential and increasing use of slaves in tobacco production, a contradiction emerges. This contradiction has structured the interpretation of both slavery and tobacco in nineteenth-century Cuba by understating the role of tobacco-based slavery in Cuba. This incongruity is largely a consequence of sugar's perceived economic dominance and control of agrarian slavery in Cuba. Midway through the century, the sugar economy had generated unprecedented wealth, supported by an equally exceptional aggrandizement of its enslaved workforce. For Knight, sugar's hegemony meant that at the midpoint of the century, "the sugar revolution also changed the zones of production" so that with the expansion of sugar into new areas of cultivation, sugar "rapidly displaced the small tobacco farmer."[116] Knight further contends that "however different were the conditions outside of the sugar industry, its economic influence was so great that the

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by selling Africans on credit and in exchange for tobacco to the vegueros. Ibid., 11: 58; de Montaud, "Spanish Fiscal Policies and Cuban Tobacco During the Nineteenth Century," 51.

[115] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 58.

[116] Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 40. For the Vuelta Abajo, this was absolutely not true, as even as late as 1861 in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, there only existed six ingenios, representing just four percent of the island's total ingenios. The marginal extent of sugar penetration into Pinar del Río will be discussed later in the chapter.

entire course of slavery was affected by the decisions of the sugar manufactures."[117] In terms of the importation of slaves, the connection with sugar's expansion was distinct, due to the labor needs of sugar in conjunction with the fact that the slave trade, as it operated in the nineteenth century, "was largely in the hands of Cuban and Spanish entrepreneurs, many sugar planters themselves or closely tied to the sugar export economy."[118] In this framework, there was no sugar without slavery, just as there was no slavery without sugar.

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY CHANGES TO CUBA'S PLANTATION ECONOMIES

However, in the mid-nineteenth century and approaching the height of Cuba's slave-based economy, there were several important phenomena that had tremendous implications for slavery as it existed on the island. Together, these phenomena led to a labor shortage that would characterize the remaining age of slavery on the island. Outside the country, these constraints included the rising tide of British abolitionism. Internally, Cuban slavery suffered from a series of hurricanes and revolutions which served to further obstruct the expansion of slavery on the island.[119] The immediate effect of these

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[117] Ibid., 68.

[118] Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 28.

[119] Multiple historians have touched on these themes as apart of their larger interpretation of Cuban slavery. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*; Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*; Robert L Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874* (Pittsburgh:: University of Pittsburgh Press,, 1999); Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*; Manuel Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); Michele Bernita Reid, "Negotiating a Slave Regime: Free People of Color in Cuba, 1844--1868" (The University of Texas at Austin, 2004).

developments was a significant reduction in the ability to acquire new slaves: "prior to 1835 the sale of African slaves dominated the Cuban slave market, although this changed significantly thereafter in favor of increasing number of Creoles."[120] Additionally, this coincided with a significant rise in the cost of acquiring new slaves as the price of a prime-age male African increased in the mid-1830s and "then increased again, by a much larger amount, from the mid-1840s."[121] These constraints created significant concerns in Cuba regarding both access to slaves and where or how best to employ slaves.

For the most part, historians have placed the expansion of the sugar industry within this period. As a result, sugar's need for labor proved to be profound, yet problematic, as the "industry was generating a massive increase in the demand for labour, of which there was a chronic shortage in the island."[122] Juxtaposed against the diminished availability of slave labor for Cuba's other agricultural economies, with planters everywhere having "an extremely difficult and sometimes impossible time finding alternative labor sources," the traditional evaluation of sugar's importance has served to isolate the scarce resource of slaves exclusively to this industry.[123] The conclusion has been that sugar's expansion occurred specifically at the expense of tobacco's reliance on enslaved labor, as all available resources, including slaves, were singularly devoted to the insatiable needs of sugar (compounded even more by the reduction in supply). This conclusion is responsible for the representation of tobacco cultivation as having a limited form of slavery over the remaining decades of the nineteenth century.

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[120] Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 44.
[121] David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 191.
[122] Jonathan Curry-Machado, "How Cuba Burned with the Ghosts of British Slavery: Race, Abolition and the Escalera," *Slavery and Abolition* 25, no. 1 (April 1, 2004): 74.
[123] Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 191.

According to the traditional interpretation, the ensuing impact of a reduced availability of slaves upon the tobacco industry was devastating. Looking at expansion of Cuban slavery through the lens of rising slave prices, David Eltis points out the correlation between the rise of sugar and an increase in slave prices, which resulted in a move away from slave-based labor in both coffee and tobacco cultivation. He concludes that in the nineteenth century "Cuban tobacco producers very likely were not able to afford slaves."[124] However, this claim fails to account for the reality that tobacco was the only other agricultural product to match the percentage increase of sugar's value between 1827 and 1862 (as measured in terms of total value of Cuba's agricultural economy). Cuba's production of tobacco more than quadrupled during this period, making its increase in production "almost as explosive as sugar" over the same period."[125] As a result, it is in this very period that Cuban vegueros successfully attempted to increase the number of slaves working in tobacco cultivation. This was partly due to the expansion in production and related rising export values that occurred at the end of the Factoría system, as well as an increased international demand for Cuban tobacco.

The extent to which tobacco farmers in Pinar del Río invested in a workforce composed of slaves during this period can be seen in the provincial court records of Pinar del Río concerning Maria de la Trinidad, a free black, who left a significant amount of property to her heirs upon her death in 1838, including a vega and five slaves. While this particular vega was not extensive (approximately half a caballería and valued at 400

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[124] Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 192.

[125] From 1827 to 1862, the production of sugar as a percentage of Cuba's total agricultural value rose by 139 percent, while tobacco's production similarly increased by 131 percent. Additionally, from 1827 (5,694,616) to 1862 (28,117,592), the raw leaf measured in kilograms represented an increase 4.9 times over. Gloria García and Orestes Gárciga, "El Inicio de La Crisis de La Economía Esclavista," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867* (La Habana: Editora Política, 1994), 370, 377.

pesos), the five slaves represented a disproportionate amount of her total property holdings, accounting for a combined total of 1,750 pesos.[126] Notably, one slave was priced at the same value as the vega, while another slave, listed at 450 pesos, exceeded the investment in land and the crop attached to it. The cost of slaves amounted to more than 78 percent of Maria's wealth; the remainder was land and other investments associated with tobacco farming, including a pair of oxen assessed at 60 pesos. The value of the slaves in terms of total property indicates Maria's commitment to using slaves on her tobacco farm as well as the magnitude of that monetary investment. Maria, like numerous other tobacco farmers in this period and region, not only had access to slaves, but also possessed the ability and considerable means to invest in this type of labor, at times representing more than three-fourths of an entire estate's value.[127]

Jean Stubbs, although saying very little about the agricultural aspect of tobacco cultivation and focusing instead on the industrialization of the finished product, still argues that on the issue of slavery, "curiously enough, given the spiraling development of tobacco and the general shortage of labor throughout nineteenth-century Cuba," the role slaves played "has almost invariably been played down."[128] The general deficit of slaves was problematic for all sectors of Cuba's plantation economy, including sugar. As late as 1857, in one sugar area, "complaints were made in this neighborhood that the want of slaves was restricting the production of sugar."[129] As a result, the thousands laboring in tobacco fields must have held a pointed meaning for both sugar planters (who proved

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[126] A caballería is approximately 33 acres.

[127] "Expediente sobre autos testamentarios de la Morena Libre Maria de la Trinidad donde se cita a los herederos para el [ ] de bienes." Archivo Histórico Provincial de Pinar del Río (hereafter, AHPPR), Fondo Instituciones Judciales Coloniales (hereafter, IJC), leg. 135, exp. 660, 1838-1841.

[128] Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*, 53.

[129] Robert Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.* (Edinburgh,, 1857), 197.

incapable of pulling in all available slaves) and tobacco farmers (who were effective at maintaining a sizable labor force and pulling in additional workers, either through direct importation or through natural reproduction). This deficit directly challenged the economic hegemony of the ingenio owners. That tobacco did not just preserve its own slave labor force but also continued to absorb additional laborers from other Cuban slave sectors is an important observation about both the economic viability and availability of slave labor in Pinar del Río. Additionally, because tobacco had become critical as an export economy and as a consumer of available slaves, the conclusion remains that sugar was not all-encompassing in either the island's economy or the slave trade. Therefore, Cuba's economy was neither as uniform as has previously been thought, nor is its slave society solely defined by the slave experience on the ingenio. Rather than being removed from Cuba's developing plantation economy, tobacco's expansion and enslaved population were contemporaneous with the exponential expansion in the sugar industry. Recognizing a new role of Cuba's tobacco economy and its use of enslaved labor produces a new evaluation of Cuba during the nineteenth century.

COFFEE, TOBACCO, AND THE HURRICANES OF THE 1840S

Vegueros were able to increase their number of slave laborers in part because of the 1840s transfer of slaves on coffee farms, *cafetales* to vegas, especially in the principal tobacco-growing region of Pinar del Río. In this period, the sudden and rapid demise of Cuba's coffee industry, the third branch of Cuba's slave-based agricultural-export economy, helped define the parameters of slavery's expansion in the last half of the nineteenth century. The first quarter of the nineteenth century was a boom time for Cuban coffee, and historians consider it to have been a true rival to sugar, in relation to the allocation of land and labor as well as potential profits. In the most recent and thorough

analysis of Cuba's coffee economy in the nineteenth century, William Van Norman argues that "the coffee plantation system proved an able rival to sugar as it generated wealth and obtained slaves at a rate only exceeded by cane planters." Similarly, Laird Bergad compares the value of land per caballería for coffee against that of sugar in the Matanzas region during the early nineteenth century; he concludes that the cafetales often equaled or exceeded the value of the ingenios in the same area.[130]

All of this changed as a result of three major hurricanes in 1842, 1844, and 1846, which together led to a pivotal restructuring of land use and labor practice in Cuba's agricultural economies.[131] According to Louis Pérez, the "magnitude of disruption of the cafetales was incalculable and in many instances permanent", while Levi Marrero describes the impact of these hurricanes as nearly eliminating the production of coffee as a basic element of Cuba's economy.[132] These historians and others conclude that after the hurricanes, the sugar industry absorbed the land and resources that had been dedicated to coffee production. Pérez argues that the combination of a destroyed coffee economy and a lack of slaves allowed sugar planters, in the aftermath of the hurricanes, to find "a new

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[130] William C. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790--1845" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), 45; Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 46–48. For a general account of the coffee industry as well as how it compares economically to other industries, see Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*, 110–127. For a more recent overview, see Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 97–135.

[131] For the most comprehensive analysis of the hurricanes of 1840s and their impact upon Cuba's society and economy, see Louis A Pérez, *Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). For a contemporary account regarding the scientific and geographical dimensions of the hurricanes of this period, see Rodríguez-Ferrer, Miguel. *Naturaleza y civilización de la grandiosa isla de Cuba, ó, Estudios variados y científicos, al alcance de todos, y otros históricos, estadísticos y políticos*... J. Noguera, 1876, chapters 9 and 10 (320-378).

[132] Pérez, *Winds of Change*, 86; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 121. Van Norman suggests the damage was significant, but less so than the larger historiography has proposed. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 118.

supply of slaves from among the failing coffee estates" and thereby secure the future prospects of sugar production in Cuba.[133]

Pérez notes the comprehensive destruction caused by the hurricanes that touched nearly all facets of agricultural production in Cuba, including tobacco, yet it his larger conclusion concerning the direct correlation between coffee and sugar which reflects the traditional historiographical understanding that the primary impact of the hurricanes was the demise of Cuba's coffee industry and the corresponding rise of the sugar industry.[134] According to the established narrative, Cuban coffee planters faced increasing competition from Brazil in addition to insurmountable losses as a result of the hurricanes' assault on Cuba's coffee crops and supporting infrastructure. As a result, many Cuban coffee planters sold their only remaining resources—land and labor—in a manner that initiated the widespread destruction of the industry. Facing financial ruin and lacking the capacity to reinitiate an industry in which initial profits could not be realized for several years, owners of coffee estates readily sold their dotaciones wherever they could maximize their return. As a result, coffee slaves were disbursed throughout Cuba's multiple slave economies. Yet for most historians, the transfer of coffee land and labor axiomatically went into sugar production. Specifically in Pérez's account, the pull of sugar in this period meant "more commonly, however, former coffee estates moved into sugar production" with "the expansion of sugar specifically at the expense of coffee [beginning] in earnest in the 1840s."[135] For Pérez, the hurricanes and their consequences

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[133] Pérez, *Winds of Change*, 104.

[134] Pérez's account of the hurricanes' impact upon tobacco, although short (coming in at just two pages), is exceptional, especially in noting how this event significantly transformed the industry. Pérez states, that in the long run, "tobacco benefitted from the demise of the cafetales, particularly in the western region of Vuelta Abajo," and that this "outcome reinforced the dominant position of the ingenio and the vega at the expense of the cafetale." Pérez, *Winds of Change,* 94-95.

[135] Pérez, *Winds of Change*, 92. See also 96–108.

for the coffee industry in Cuba were directly responsible for a significant enlargement of the sugar industry during this period.

Pérez is not alone in this assumption, as Franklin Knight offers a similar assessment: "As coffee production declined, the sugar planters moved in to take over the land and slaves." Marrero also echoes this argument: viewing the impact of the hurricanes as a "crisis" within the coffee industry that was exacerbated by a "massive transference of coffee slaves" with most passing to the ingenios. Similarly, Gloria García cites sugar as the "biggest beneficiary" of coffee's liquidation of land and workers.[136] Other historians see this transference as nearly comprehensive, arguing that the increase in sugar production during this period was "made possible by shifts in the use of the island's slave labor away from previous employment in urban areas and in the production of tobacco and coffee."[137] These conclusions help explain an important period of growth for Cuba's sugar economy, but because of their exclusive focus on sugar, they fail to take into account the hurricanes' impact on other industries.

A closer analysis (one that maintains a crop-specific focus especially in relation to viable zones of production) suggests that sugar was not the exclusive recipient of coffee's resources; tobacco farms also directly benefited from the redistribution of land and labor formally associated with coffee production. This was especially true in Pinar del Río and in the region of the Vuelta Abajo where, according to Levi Marrero, "the nuclei of cafetales in Cuba most flourished" to the degree that in the early decades of the

[136] Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 40; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 121; García, "El Auge de La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," 259.
[137] Fraginals M. Moreno, Herbert S Klein, and Stanley L Engerman, "The Level and Structure of Slave Prices on Cuban Plantations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Some Comparative Perspectives," *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 5 (1983): 1205.

nineteenth century, coffee production competed with the tobacco cultivation.[138] By the mid-point of the nineteenth century and in the aftermath of the hurricanes, this competition had been decided in tobacco's favor. And as a result, contrary to established arguments, it was the tobacco economy and not sugar that took greatest advantage of this development in the Vuelta Abajo. This was a pivotal change for the use of slaves in cultivating tobacco as the economy shifted to larger dotaciones and vegas. In the Vuelta Abajo, there was a direct causal relationship between the hurricanes and an increase in tobacco-based slaves, a development that has previously been understood as occurring only within the sugar industry. A broad range of statistical data demonstrates that in the geographic heart of Cuban tobacco cultivation, the decline of the coffee economy coincided with an expansion of tobacco production in the Vuelta Abajo, as more land became available for use by tobacco's growing economy. At the same time, the coffee industry's decline also acted as a significant catalyst for the enlargement of the slave-based labor force in tobacco cultivation.

The coffee industry in Cuba was ravaged by the impact of successive hurricanes in a concentrated period, the extent of which can be seen in the difference between coffee production and number of slaves before the hurricanes and after the hurricanes. In 1862, the coffee industry employed just fewer than 26,000 slaves, in contrast to the 50,000 slaves it employed in 1827.[139] In terms of production, in 1862 the coffee harvest had dropped by almost 75 percent of 1827 levels.[140] The western half of the island suffered

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[138] Although the following authors do not addresses the growing slave-based tobacco economy in their analyses, they do provide important geographic specificity to the relationship between tobacco and coffee in this region: Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*; Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery"; Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*.

[139] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 114, 130.

[140] Ibid., 11: 130.

the worst of the damage, as the impact of the hurricanes was particularly pronounced in this area. In the Vuelta Abajo region the cultivation of coffee was cut by more than half in the aftermath of the last hurricane in 1846: production decreased from 3,473 pounds in 1846 to just 1,775 in 1862.[141] José María de la Torre wrote in 1855 that as a result of the hurricanes, there were "no coffee plantations" in the province of Pinar del Río.[142] By 1862, only one cafetale in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río.[143] This lone cafetale also illustrates the extreme decline in the number of slaves devoted to coffee cultivation in the region: although this was a particularly large estate with 152 listed slaves attached to it, these slaves represented the total measure of listed coffee slaves in the entire region.[144]

The contrast of coffee with tobacco in this area in regard to production, number of farms, and extent of slavery is illuminating. As coffee growers abandoned their farms en masse and were forced to sell anything remaining of value, including most of their land and labor, vegueros located in the same area of Pinar del Río as many of the cafetales also faced widespread destruction. However, conditions unique to tobacco production served to mitigate the degree of devastation. For example, tobacco yields a seasonal harvest, whereas coffee yields an annual harvest, and an initial coffee crop can take up to seven years to cultivate. As a result, tobacco production only suffered a temporary setback, and since it inherently required fewer initial costs, recovery was much more immediate. As the contemporary traveler Carlton Rogers noted, hurricanes appeared to affect tobacco and sugar farms less than it affected cafetales.[145]

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[141] Ibid., 11: 132.
[142] José María de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies: Cuba and Porto Rico: Geographical, Political, and Industrial*, 1855, 75.
[143] Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 133.
[144] Ibid., 38.
[145] Carlton Holmes Rogers, *Incidents of Travel in the Southern States and Cuba with a Description of the Mammoth Cave* (General Books LLC, 2010), 127.

Another factor also suggesting a direct transfer of coffee's resources to tobacco is the reality that coffee and tobacco had a closer relationship than either had with sugar, in terms of scale of production, labor requirements, and slave demographics. Their similarity was heightened when the tobacco industry in the Vuelta Abajo underwent a general aggrandizement of its production model to more closely mirror the larger coffee estates of the period.[146] The ease with which tobacco could readily co-opt coffee's similar resources was noted by several individuals in the nineteenth century, including Wenceslao Ramírez de Villa Urrutia. Ramírez had previously argued that even if slaves were not necessary for the production of tobacco, their use nevertheless would "grow and multiple" tobacco's products to the point that it would rival sugar. Writing in 1844, he explicitly framed this argument in the context of Cuba's coffee economy by claiming that the introduction of more slaves could be achieved with relatively little effort if Cuban planters would transfer only one-third of the slaves currently employed in the unproductive coffee industry.[147]

Based upon shared similarities in land and labor use, officials in Spain were also attuned to the feasibility of replacing coffee with tobacco, maintaining in 1845 that if tobacco was "protected with an absolute freedom from duties by the supreme government, [it] could perhaps supply in the same manner the deficit that should come very soon from the depressed and almost expiring cultivation of coffee."[148] In fact, as the

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[146] Van Norman writes that though they were rivals, "the cafetales were not mirror images of the ingenios. Rather, they developed along a different path and had important differences from cane farms." Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 45. For a reduced work regime in comparison to sugar, see Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 293. For the occurrence of internal staple production similar to that on vegas, see John Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 144.

[147] As quoted in, Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 59.

[148] Superintendencia General Delegada de Real Hacienda Spain, *Informe Fiscal Sobre Fomento de La Población Blanca En La Isla de Cuba y Emancipación Progresiva de La Esclava Con, Una Breve Reseña*

report also notes, this was already occurring. Due to the September 1842 reduction in the taxes applied on ingenios, which adversely affected the coffee industry's ability to compete, many cafetales were being planted with tobacco seeds, resulting in an "advantageous change to how the land was used as these smaller crops proved more profitable."[149] Similarly, the contemporary writer Maturin Ballou remarks that with the demise of coffee, not all planters devoted their farms to sugar production; many turned to tobacco cultivation.[150] In contrast to historiographic accounts that axiomatically see coffee as giving way to sugar production, these contemporary observers noted the ease with which tobacco could and did replace coffee.

The viability of the transfer of coffee's resources to tobacco can be also seen on a macro and micro level in Pinar del Río with longstanding and immediate changes to the fundamental structure of tobacco cultivation in this region occurring in the wake of the hurricanes' destruction.[151] In terms of production, the hurricanes of the 1840s were followed by rapid and significant gains in tobacco production, as measured by exports of raw leaf. In fact, tobacco had its most productive cycle of the decade in the four years surrounding the last of the three hurricanes, from 1845 through 1848, with tobacco's two biggest years, 1846 and 1847, occurring in the immediate aftermath of the last

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de Las Reformas y Modificaciones Que Para Conseguirlo (Madrid: Impr. de J. Martín Alegria, 1845), 40. Additionally, this report noted the desirability of tobacco as a substitute for coffee based upon tobacco's suitability for small-scale production and the high profit available relative to low land and labor use.

[149] Ibid., 90. Note, it should be stated that this report frames the "advantage" only in terms of white landowners without mention to the effect upon either the free or enslaved black class.

[150] Maturin Murray Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and co, 1885), 246.

[151] The impact of the last hurricane in 1846 was diminished in the tobacco fields, and the coming crop was not expected to be "as small as one might think." Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 20, 1845, 342.

hurricane.[152] This nearly instantaneous recovery of Pinar del Río's tobacco economy was also identified by one of the preeminent authorities on Cuban tobacco writing during this period, Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer. Rodríguez-Ferrer located the revitalization of tobacco primarily in its return to positive production, in contrast to the more destructive impact of the hurricanes on other agricultural sectors. As compared to the longer recovery time these sectors face, he cited a more than 32 percent increase in quantity of raw leaf exports from 1845 (6,674,873 libras) to 1846 (8,826,047 libras). This robust increase in the wake of a series of hurricanes was remarkable, and although the rate of increase would eventually subside, tobacco continued to demonstrate positive growth through the following year, 1847 (9,309,500 libras).[153]

The appearance of a resilient tobacco economy takes on additional value in the comparison with competing slave-based economies in Cuba during this period, notably sugar. According to official reports, in terms of export commodities, tobacco demonstrated the largest rate of growth of each of Cuba's principal products exported from 1844 to 1847. Moreover, in 1847, tobacco exported more than double its 1844 quantities, showing a 101 percent growth rate. During the same period, sugar only grew by 26.3 percent.[154] This figure gives credence to James Phillippo's claim, upon reviewing the state of Cuba's economy in the 1850s, that "the principal products of the

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[152] Diario de la Marina de la Habana., *Estado Político y Económico de La Isla de Cuba En 1851*, 1852; J.D.B. De Bow, *The Industrial Resources, Etc., of the Southern and Western States: Embracing a View of Their Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, Internal Improvements, Slave and Free Labor, Slavery Institutions, Products, Etc., of the South.*, vol. XIV, No. 2, 1853, 112.

[153] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 57–58. One libra is roughly equivalent to 2.2 lbs.

[154] *Balanza general del comercio de la Isla de Cuba ... por la mesa de balanza, comercio y mineria* (Imprenta del Gobierno y de la Real Hacienda por S. M., 1846), 135, 167. Gloria García notes that over the course of the 1840s, the increase in the production of tobacco from the previous decade measured 81 percent, matching that of sugar for the same period. García, "El Auge de La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," 259.

country…are sugar and tobacco."[155] Paula Arias further testified to the significant expansion of Cuba's tobacco economy in wake of the hurricanes of the 1840s, arguing that by 1855, the production of tobacco had rivaled that of sugar. Arias made this claim explicitly in the context of coffee's demise over the previous decade as a result of the hurricanes.[156] Contemporary data provided by Jacobo de la Pezuela confirm the conclusions of Arias and others, as Pezuela noted the substantial and long-term gains in the tobacco industry as total exports rose from 2,681,647 arrobas in 1841 to 3,921,465 arrobas in the following decade.[157] This increase of more than 46 percent across a ten-year period underscores tobacco's sustainability and growth.

The most impressive figures demonstrating the unparalleled growth of the tobacco economy come from an official report on this sector by Valentin Pardo y Betancourt, in which he "authentically and incontestably" cited "figures taken from purely official data" that show the following increases in exportation across the agricultural and commercial branches of tobacco between 1844 and 1854: raw tobacco, 112 percent; manufactured tobacco, 59 percent; chopped or loose leaf tobacco, 976 percent; cigarettes, 2,246 percent. What is even more astounding is that the cultivation of tobacco, as seen in the export numbers of raw leaf, not only sustained this growth over that decade but also

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[155] James Mursell Phillippo, *The United States and Cuba* (Pewtress & co., 1857), 434. Phillippo goes onto to cite the export value of raw tobacco leaf up to 1850 so that it is possible to see the rate of growth at the end of the decade which showed a 38.1 percent increase in 1850 from 1848 and a 98.5 percent increase in 1850 from 1849. Ibid., 437.

[156] Antonio Paula Arias, *El Veguero de Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña de Las Causas de La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.* (Pinar del Rio: Est. tip. de M. Vives, 1887), 57.

[157] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863), 571.

overwhelmingly eclipsed it in the next half decade, showing a 3,354 percent increase from 1854 to 1859.[158]

In addition to export values, the inverse relationship between the demise of the coffee industry and the growth of the tobacco industry in Pinar del Río is further demonstrated by the impressive long-term growth in overall numbers and percentages of listed vegas in the area. In the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río and the immediate surrounding area in 1846, the year of the last major hurricane of that decade, there were zero cafetales listed, in contrast to 1,635 tobacco farms.[159] By 1861, the number of vegas had risen to 2,138, representing a 32 percent increase.[160] In 1862, the number of official tobacco estates in the area around this region of Pinar del Río had risen to 3,616, with an overall increase of more than 122 percent between 1846 and 1862.[161] For comparison, Pinar del Río had just one cafetale in 1862, while the number of ingenios grew from four in 1846 to five in 1862.[162] The production-specific geography of Pinar del Río, especially the Vuelta Abajo region, when combined with rising international market for Cuban tobacco, served to exclude any inroads the sugar industry might have made as a result of the area's cafetales disappearing, leaving tobacco and its vegas as the sole expanding enterprise in the province.

The transfer of coffee estates and production resources to tobacco was occurring even before the destruction of the 1840s hurricanes, largely as a result of international

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158 Valentin Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861* (Habana: Impr. del Tiempo, 1863), 17–19.
159 The number of cafetales listed for the entire province was also zero. Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 85.
160 Félix Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año de 1855*, vol. 3 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1859), vol. 4 pg 2262.
161 Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 134.
162 Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 41; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 133.

demand imposing divergent demands upon each crop.[163] According to economic data compiled in the first two years of the 1840s, coffee and tobacco in Cuba developed inversely in this period as well. Coffee exports significantly declined in the period preceding the hurricanes, from 69,133 arrobas in April 1841 to just 599 arrobas in September 1841. In contrast, tobacco, beginning with a 57 percent increase in quantity of raw leaf exported from December 1840 to January 1841, demonstrated significant growth in 1841, from 94,220 libras in April to a high of 194,080 arrobas exported in August.[164]

The historian Robert Paquette notes that "already sick coffee estates succumbed" to the first hurricane, a statement supported by Marrero, who dates the process of decline for coffee as having begun in the 1830s.[165] Further backdating coffee's demise, contemporary author Abiel Abbot claimed that Cuban planters in the 1820s, especially those who had previously grown coffee, were devoting a larger percentage of their land to tobacco cultivation.[166] The 1827 census also supports this claim, noting that tobacco was generally cultivated by poor people, but thanks to the low price in coffee in the last years, more wealthy people were turning to it.[167] The growing value of tobacco during this period and an increasing ability to grow tobacco—partly as a result of the end of the monopoly—helps explain why more and more land in Cuba was transitioning from

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[163] For the argument that capital investments in coffee began to decline after 1830, see Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 40; Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 29.

[164] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 11 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1840), 228, 301; Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 12 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1841), 79, 160, 240, 320, 399, 476.

[165] Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood*, 232; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 121.

[166] Abiel Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, The Black Heritage Library Collection (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 137; see also de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 58.

[167] Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...*, 30.

cafetales to vegas.[168] This development is particularly interesting with respect to coffee planters, many of whom, Abbot argued, "may repair their fortunes" by cultivating "the fascinating weed for which master and slave, and in this country, I might also say, ladies and gentleman, are equally eager."[169] As a result of this evolution, there is a strong case for tobacco surpassing coffee much earlier than the 1840s. If that is the case, rather than assuming that sugar absorbed the cafetales' former slaves, it is more than likely that many of these slaves were purchased for tobacco work, especially considering that tobacco's expansion in the 1840s occurred on the heels of coffee's demise.

In addition to economic and vega expansion, tobacco in the Vuelta Abajo had also shown extraordinary growth in its use of slaves just before the hurricanes. Beginning in 1819, the more than three thousand slaves in Pinar del Río accounted for 28 percent of the region's total population.[170] This is not a vega- or slave-specific statistic, but as has been demonstrated, tobacco cultivation in this region encompassed nearly all the area's economic activities and resources, including slaves. By the next census in 1827, the number of slaves had increased by 41 percent (3,634 to 5,104), yet the ratio of slaves to overall population in the area remained steady at 27 percent.[171] Nevertheless, this pattern of slave expansion would continue as the number of slaves in this area escalated from 5,104 in 1827 to 12,137 in 1846. In this later period however, an increase in the number of total slaves in the region now corresponded to an increase in the percentage of slaves,

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[168] Citing a royal order dated 1811, Charlotte Cosner provides an account of officials making a concerted effort to send Cuban vegueros to other parts of the Spanish empire in order to stimulate a tobacco economy in such faraway places as Peru. This timing suggests that officials, even at the height of coffee cultivation in Cuba, recognized the economic benefit in tobacco production. Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 39–40.

[169] Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 139.

[170] Santovenia, Emeterio, *Pinar Del Río*, 76.

[171] Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...*, 45-60.

who in 1846 were 30 percent of the total population of Pinar del Río. This expansion represents an astounding increase of 138 percent in the growth of this community in less than two decades, justifying the claim that that by 1840 "the use of slaves in cultivating tobacco was widespread from the Vuelta Abajo all the way to the far east of the island."[172]

Remarkably, the rate of growth for the slave population of Pinar del Río would sustain such elevated numbers in the years before the next census in 1862. In 1862, the number of slaves located in Pinar del Río province had risen to 28,882. In a striking contrast to an island-wide rate of growth in number of slaves (13.8 percent), Pinar del Río's expansion of its enslaved population again experienced a 138 percent rate of growth in the provincial slave population between 1846 and 1862.[173] Largely a consequence of the hurricanes' effect upon the tobacco industry in the western region of Cuba as well as dynamic growth in its export sector, the trend of expansion in the use of slaves for the tobacco industry in Pinar del Río would continue for the rest of the century.[174] Moreover, during a critical junction in the restructuring and expanding

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[172] Ibid., 45–60; Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 86; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 13: 203. In numbers that I have been unable to verify, Torres-Cuevas cites 7,927 slaves laboring in vegas in 1827, a number which rose to 14,263 in 1841, and resulted in an 80 percent increase in this population during this period. Torres-Cuevas, "'La Sociedad Exclavista y Sus Contradicciones'," 284.

[173] The total save population from 1846 to 1862 rose from 323,759 to 368,550. Note, in addition to the two main jurisdictions of the Vuelta Abajo, Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, I have included within Pinar del Río's provincial totals the jurisdiction of Bahia-Honda whose slaves totaled, 6,115, but excluded Guanajay, whose slaves equaled 17,145. While both of these locales are within the political territory of Pinar del Río province and both can be considered prime tobacco growing land, only Bahia-Honda can be judged to have an economy that is primarily devoted to tobacco so that the majority of its slaves are deemed to be used in the cultivation of tobacco, while Guanajay does not exclusively meet this criteria. Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 14.

[174] Tobacco slavery expanded both over the long term and at a jurisdictional level in the two primary tobacco zones of the Vuelta Abajo within Pinar del Río province, Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal. Each added nearly a thousand slaves per year. In 1858, Pinar del Río had 12,738 slaves, and San Cristóbal had 7,568; in 1859, Pinar del Río had 13,834 slaves, and San Cristóbal had 8,129. In 1860, Pinar del Río listed 14,590 slaves, while San Cristóbal counted 7,760 slaves. By 1862, the numbers had risen to 14,966 for Pinar del Río and 7,771 for San Cristóbal. Erenchun, *Anales de*

plantation economy of Cuba, the slave population in Pinar del Río (especially the prime tobacco-growing regions) not only maintained an extraordinary rate of growth over nearly four decades but actually outpaced the national rate of growth for the same demographic.

These numbers provide evidence of the expansion of slavery in a geographic area overwhelmingly devoted to tobacco cultivation, yet they do not precisely detail the degree of slavery's expansion in Pinar del Río's vegas. However, it is possible using the available resources to determine approximate rate of growth for slavery on exclusively tobacco-based estates between the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes and the following decades. 1846 census data, though lacking a division of slaves according to occupation, contains the unusual specification of the provincial population living on vegas, which for Pinar del Río is listed as 81 percent.[175] Assuming that the pattern of 81 percent of Pinar del Río's rural population laboring on vegas can also be applied to the known number of slaves (12,137) and vegas (3,450), these figures suggest an average of three slaves per vega for the entire province. This number would constitute part of the 9.3 total average population per vega in Pinar del Río, implying that of those listed as residing on vegas, one-third were slaves. However, it can be argued that both the total and average number of slaves laboring on tobacco farms in this province is higher than that, since slaves were valuable economic property that would most likely be bought by the more prosperous planters of the region and used in the most profitable industry of the region, tobacco. The possibility of having such a high concentration of any population

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La Isla de Cuba, 1859, 3:1484, 1489. Note that these slave numbers represent only rural based slaves within each jurisdiction. See, also Félix Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año de 1855*, vol. 4 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1861), 2262; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 11, 38.

[175] Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 85.

laboring on a single crop is supported by the examples of San Juan y Martínez and Consolación del Sur, two central tobacco-growing regions within Pinar del Río, whose percentages of rural population living on vegas were listed at 97 and 94 percent, respectively. And while the exact numbers of slaves in these locations are not known, it is noteworthy that they respectively held the second and third highest number of vegas in the province.[176]

The 1862 census is the only data set to specifically enumerate the number of slaves residing upon vegas in Pinar del Río. According to this census, the combined slave populations of the jurisdictions of Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal listed as cultivating tobacco amounts to 14,936.[177] For Pinar del Río, these slaves represent 81 percent of the entire slave force in the jurisdiction.[178] That percentage mirrors the ratio of Pinar del Río's total provincial population listed as residing on tobacco estates in 1846.[179] Applying this same percentage to the 12,137 slaves listed in Pinar del Río province in 1846, the enslaved population on these vegas can be roughly estimated at 9,830.[180] Comparing the estimated number of slaves on vegas in Pinar del Río province in 1846 to the identified number of tobacco-based slaves in Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal in 1862,

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[176] Ibid.; Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 61.

[177] Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 38. These 14,936 tobacco slaves represent 95 percent of all tobacco slaves in the western half of the island and 84 percent of all tobacco slaves island wide.

[178] This percentage compares favorably to three of the leading sugar producing regions—Matanzas, Cárdenas and Colón—where in the same period, the total percentages of slaves residing on ingenios were 64.2, 74.3, and 82.2 respectively. Laird W. Bergad, "Slave Prices in Cuba, 1840-1875," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, no. 4 (November 1, 1987): 632, n.2, doi:10.2307/2516047.

[179] Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 85. Marrero cites a figure of 87.6 percent of all residents in Pinar del Río as living on vegas. Interestingly, this is more than two and one-half times more than the next highest jurisdiction in Cuba and far above the national average of rural population living on vegas, which measures just 16.8 percent. Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 60.

[180] Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 86. Using Marrero's higher estimate, this number would rise to 10,632 slaves on vegas in 1846. Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 60.

there is a 52 percent increase in the use of tobacco slaves in this region over this period. In the wake of the hurricanes of the 1840s, the intensification of tobacco-based slaves in Pinar del Río represents a sizable development occurring across a protracted period of time during which slavery elsewhere on the island either dissipated or severely contracted.

The depth and immediacy of the expansion of tobacco-based slavery as a result of coffee's contraction can be seen on a local level in the jurisdiction of Mariel, a central coffee-growing zone located on the edge of the Vuelta Abajo. A report published by the Sociedad Económica in July 1847 stated that in this area, located within Pinar del Río province, the coffee economy has "decayed" and that a considerable number of cafetales have abandoned "all or the better part of their dotación in order to apply them to other lucrative industries."[181] In this case, the removal of coffee slaves to "other lucrative industries" in this region adjoining the Vuelta Abajo translated into significant increases in the number of slaves located on tobacco vegas. This is further seen in one of Mariel's subdivisions, the municipality of Guanajay, where the effect of the hurricanes on the tobacco economy was even more transparent. In this area the number of vegas rose from 66 in 1846 to 80 in 1847, while only one additional ingenio was added in the same period, to bring the total to twelve.[182] It is impossible to trace the new locations or occupations of the approximately 5,700 slaves that had been devoted to coffee production

[181] José Maria de la Torre and Tranquilino Sandalio de Noda, "Marien. Noticias históricas, geográficas y estadísticas de esta Jurisdicción," in *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de La Habana*, 2d ser. 4, 1847, 166.

[182] Virtudes, a rural neighborhood of Guanajay renowned for its considerable high-quality tobacco output, demonstrates how the importance of geography underlines the extent of production for specific economies, as seventy-eight of the eighty vegas in Guanajay were located in Virtudes, while only one ingenio was listed within this same area. Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 4, 2, 1847, 180; Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 92.

in this area in 1846, however, these slaves more than likely went to one (or both) of the two leading slave-based agricultural economies of Cuba, sugar and tobacco.[183]

This relocation of coffee land and slaves to tobacco-based production contradicts an argument that in this pivotal decade, the majority of coffee slaves were transferred to ingenios. As an example, David Eltis cites one official estimate that 38,000 slaves had been transferred from Cuban coffee estates to sugar plantations in the period from 1846 to 1848. This is a large number, but as Eltis notes, it was only one third of the slave-based coffee population in 1841. Although the fate of the other seventy-five thousand slaves is unknown, it is reasonable to conclude, however, that a comprehensive re-allocation of enslaved laborers from coffee to sugar did not happen, at least in the immediacy of the Vuelta Abajo region of Pinar del Río.[184] Certainly a large percentage of the former coffee slave population could have been sold eastward into the central part of the island where sugar predominated. But in Pinar del Río, the production of sugar remained miniscule even after the hurricanes: one estimate placed the production of sugar in Pinar del Río at just .14 percent of the island's total sugar production.[185] An observation by the traveler William Hurlbert seems to confirm this: in 1854 he lists only one "large sugar-planter" in the populous region of the western Vuelta Abajo."[186] Rather than being exclusively co-

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[183] Similar to the rough estimate regarding tobacco-based slaves in Pinar del Río in 1846, the number of coffee slaves in Mariel is arrived at by applying the known percentage of slaves as part of the total population to the known percentage of total inhabitants residing upon cafetales in the region to reach a best approximation of coffee slaves in Mariel. Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 92.

[184] Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 191. It should be noted that Eltis clearly believes that the unaccounted-for slaves did not go into tobacco cultivation, as in his view, vegueros in general could not afford slaves, while those that did own slaves were, more likely than not, forced to sell those slaves to sugar plantations during this period.

[185] de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 122.

[186] William Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.* (New York: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 84.

opted by sugar, it is more likely that some of these slaves contributed to the expansion in numbers of enslaved workers devoted to tobacco cultivation, which by this period in Cuban history was estimated at 40,000.[187]

The transferal of slaves into the expanding tobacco economy of the Vuelta Abajo had important consequences for the scale of production in this area. Building on contemporary reports as well as the gains in tobacco production, numbers of vegas, and the tobacco slave population, the Cuban historian Julio Le Riverend argues that the fall of coffee "opened the way for the conversion of the coffee plantations into…the first large tobacco plantations of the capitalist type, with great number of slaves."[188] Pérez also explains the advent of large-scale tobacco production in Pinar del Río as occurring when "producers converted defunct coffee estates into large vegas, relocating slave labor to tobacco production."[189] Levi Marrero is even more emphatic in his assessment of the impact of the 1844 hurricane. Arguing from a more tobacco-centric perspective, Marrero states that the hurricanes ruined almost all the cafetales in the western part of the island and insists that this directly "favored the cultivation of tobacco in the Vuelta Abajo in the

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[187] José García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración* (Habana: Impr. del Gobierno y Captianía General, 1852), 144; Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:577. It should be noted that while Arboleya and Pezuela give the same estimate for tobacco slaves, they differ in other related matters concerning number of vegas, and land cultivated. It is worth noting that the authors of a United States census describe Arboleya as faithful and accurate. United States, *Report on the Census of Cuba, 1899* (Washington: Govt. print. off, 1900), 734. In contrast to Arboleya and Pezuela, José Antonio Saco's asserts that during this period, regarding both coffee and tobacco "all in Cuba know and confess that they could well be preserved and extended without the help of slaves." José Antonio Saco, *La supresion del tráfico de esclavos Africanos en la isla de Cuba: Examinada con relación a su agricultura y a su seguridad* (Imprs. de Panckoucke, 1845), 7.

[188] Julio Le Riverend in Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, vol. 3, 160. The author offers a contradictory statement (one that is perhaps influenced by an overarching focus across the volumes that generally dismisses tobacco-based slavery in Cuba) when he states that tobacco "was maintained as a lesser crop, and with little participation of slave labor" even after the end of the monopoly in 1817, when despite attempts to introduce slaves into the vegas, the effort to transform the plant into a plantation crop "was never really achieved." *Ibid*, 172.

[189] Pérez, *Winds of Change*, 95.

following years."[190] Marrero goes on to link this salutary effect on the tobacco industry with an immediate increase in the slave population of the region; he argues that some coffee farmers sold slaves to the owners of ingenios, while "others preferred to form vegas of larger dimensions than traditional."[191] Because of coffee, Cuban tobacco in the Vuelta Abajo underwent a fundamental evolution towards increased production scales on individual estates. This explains the general trend toward latifundia in tobacco's production structure beginning at the midpoint of the nineteenth century; a process marked by an enlargement of estate size and enhanced dependence on a larger number of slaves.

The views of Marrero and others contradict one aspect of a paradox presented by John S. Thrasher, translator of a later abridged and controversial publication of Alexander von Humboldt's original work. In one of his notes, Thrasher critiques the growth of tobacco at the expense of sugar and coffee—"the more popular and profitable pursuits"—most notably in the allocation of capital and labor on the island.[192] This element of Thrasher's criticism regarding tobacco contrasts with Marrero and other historians who promote a view that favors the large-scale expansion of tobacco. Yet, writing in the 1850s, Thrasher ends his brief discussion by moving closer to their interpretation, especially to that of Marrero, who uniquely sees tobacco's growth as directly opposed to the growth of sugar. Thrasher offers a positive prediction for tobacco, stating that it is now receiving a larger share of slave labor and that when "a still larger share of the skill and capital now absorbed in the cane-fields, shall be turned to the tobacco *vegas*, we may

[190] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 50.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 175.

look for more regular and certain crops, and a corresponding ratio of prosperity."[193] This seemingly incongruent statement by Thrasher is partly explained by trends that were occurring before, during, and immediately after the tumultuous decade of the 1850s, all of which conditioned tobacco for increased scales of production.

As an example, the teleology of tobacco slavery's development, marked by large-scale expansion driven by coffee's decline in the Vuelta Abajo, can be seen on a particular vega described by Tomás de Salazar. In an official report on the agricultural production of tobacco in 1849, the author referenced a planter who bought a vega in 1835 that already had a dotación of eight slaves and proceeded to add five more immediately and others over the following years until he had 30 slaves by 1849.[194] This example corroborates the larger contention of Ramón de la Sagra, who suggested that cafetales and their slave populations were moving to vegas and tobacco production even before the 1840s. Sagra backdates the growth of tobacco, partly explained in connection to the coffee industry, to the period before the devastation of the hurricanes. He reasons that even at the height of coffee production, owners of cafetales in the Vuelta Abajo sought to take advantage of increasing profits in tobacco by "assigning part of their dotación of slaves" specifically to tobacco cultivation."[195] Sagra's argument was published in February 1845, well before the last hurricane of this period hit in October 1846. His claim suggests a need for a longer-term perspective that views the transition after the hurricanes as an intensification of an earlier period. Sagra's own data suggest that the

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[193] Ibid. Italics in the original.

[194] Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco*, 6 (n 1).

[195] Ramón de la Sagra, *Cuba: 1860; Selección De Artículos Sobre Agricultura Cubana* (Habana: Comisión Nacional Cubana de la UNESCO, 1963), 169. The contemporary author Puala Arias also cites a severe attack in 1841 by the insecet called "La Guagua" that destroyed numerous cafetales. Paula Arias, *El Veguero de Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña de Las Causas de La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.*, 57.

reason for an increase in tobacco slavery was the increasing profit attached to tobacco even in the early phases of the nineteenth century. A comparison of Cuban exports from 1826 to 1830 showed a 26 percent growth rate for sugar, a 1 percent growth rate for coffee, a 102 percent growth rate for raw tobacco leaf, and a 106 percent growth rate in manufactured tobacco products.[196]

That Sagra's perspective precedes the 1840s, while Salazar's example occurred after the last hurricane in the series that wrecked the particular tobacco region, points to an overarching expansion in slaves cultivating tobacco during the nineteenth century. The fact that the vegueros in Pinar del Río were expanding tobacco production with slaves alongside sugar's expansion meant the two were competing directly for the land and slaves of defunct coffee farms. Rather than be subsumed by that competition with sugar and its rising profits or "induced [to] a switch of coerced labor from tobacco into sugar" as Eltis has argued, tobacco producers continued to successfully expand the number of slave holdings in opposition to sugar's demands.[197] Moreover, because the trajectory of tobacco's expansion continued unabated throughout the nineteenth century as a result, it is absolutely untrue that the "*ingenios* must have absorbed almost all of the 250,000 *bozales* that arrived in Cuba in these years, particularly after 1835."[198] In this case, the existence of an expanding tobacco economy, and one increasingly dependent upon slave

[196] Sagra gives the following numbers for the listed commodities, with all measured in arrobas, except manufactured tobacco, which is measured in libras: sugar, 6,237,390 to 7,868,881; coffee, 1,773,798 to 1,798,598; tobacco, leaf, 79,851 to 160, 358; tobacco, manufactured, 197,194 to 407,152. Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*, 211. For comparison of exports out of the port of Havana (in terms of growth) from 1823 to 1830 that reflect similar percentages, see Ibid., 176.
[197] Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 192.
[198] Ibid. Italics in original.

labor, not only influences the depiction of sugar slavery and its growth but also the larger understanding of Cuban slavery during this period.

Tobacco saw significant increases in land, labor, and most significantly, slaves in the immediate aftermath of the 1840s hurricanes that decimated Cuba's coffee economy. This growth challenges the argument that the dominance of sugar in western Cuba "was not completed until the mid-nineteenth century" when "other crops," essentially coffee, "which had previously competed with sugar for land and labor, began to falter and fail."[199] These findings also suggest that the origins of latifundia in Cuba's tobacco economy are explicitly located in the aftermath of the hurricanes in the 1840s; a process made possible by the land and enslaved labor that tobacco took over from coffee. In addition, these findings suggest a new storyline about Cuba's plantation economy in the nineteenth century. After the demise of the Cuban coffee industry, tobacco, through increased land acquisition and labor, emerges to "regain importance"; it then fundamentally influences the institution of slavery on the island by helping maintain a diversified slave-based economy.[200]

THE TOBACCO ECONOMY OF THE 1860S: THE GENERAL EXPANSION OF VEGAS AND SLAVE POPULATIONS

These historical accounts and statistical data show the impact of the 1840s hurricanes on the coffee economy in western Cuba, as well as the consequences for tobacco production. The expansion of tobacco and its slave population in Pinar del Río during the mid-point of the nineteenth century was not only an economic issue, however.

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[199] Pérez, *Winds of Change*, 93.

[200] Grupo Cubano de Investigaciones Económicas, *A Study on Cuba; the Colonial and Republican Periods, The Socialist Experiment, Economic Structure, Institutional Development, Socialism and Collectivization* (Coral Gables, Fla: University of Miami Press, 1965), 63.

It took place in a context of broader social, political and demographical developments that significantly influenced the parameters of tobacco-based slavery.

The most pressing concern during this periodwas the impact British abolitionists' measures were having in Cuba. Slavery was coming under question just as the supply of available slaves within Cuba was severely reduced. [201] The result produced a state of crisis for Cuba's plantation economy and left estate owners across Cuba facing an "abysmal state of plantation force" and a larger sense of "urgency" to replace these workers.[202] In a measure designed to address the perceived insufficient supply of slaves for Cuba's plantation-based economy, the Cuban government suggested a variety of new taxes for slaves not working in agricultural production, along with a reduction of taxes for planters in rural export sectors who encouraged the natural reproduction of their slave populations.[203] Outside the country, international pressure meant that "African imports had virtually ceased."[204] As a result, "slave prices increased more between the mid-1840s

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[201] Alongside abolitionists pressures inhibiting the growth of slavery in Cuba, two outbreaks of cholera during the first half of the nineteenth century also have relevancy to Cuba's slave population. Kenneth Kiple provides the best estimate of the effect that the first case of Asiatic cholera had upon Cuban society, noting that this first cholera pandemic in the western hemisphere arrived in Cuba in February 1833 and that over a period of three years "there seems little doubt" that "the disease had killed at least 22,000 of the islands' slaves, or about 8 percent of the slave population." Another cholera outbreak occurred in 1850 and within five years resulted in the death of more than 30,000 slaves—just under 10 percent of the slave population. Kenneth F. Kiple, *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146; Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Fighting Slavery in the Caribbean the Life and Times of a British Family in Nineteenth-Century Havana*, Latin American Realities (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 120; David A Sartorius, "Slavery, Conucos, and the Local Economy: Ingenio Santa Rosalia, Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1860-1886" (UNC, 1997), 12; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 14. Laird Bergad writes that in one town, up to 60 percent of slaves on an individual farm perished, revealing the impact that these demographic disasters could have upon local communities and their estates. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 71.

[202] Reid, "Negotiating a Slave Regime," 131.

[203] Fe Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba* (Editorial Academia, 1986), 76.

[204] Laird W. Bergad, "The Economic Viability of Sugar Production Based on Slave Labor in Cuba, 1859-1878," *Latin American Research Review* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 95. The following authors cite a figure of just 8,700 slaves introduced into Cuba from 1863 to 1867: María del Carmen Barcia and Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "El Debilitamiento de Las Relaciones Sociales Esclavistas. Del Reformismo Liberal a La

and early 1860s than in any other comparable period in the history of Cuban slavery," with some Cuban historians placing the rise in prices at 103 percent.[205]

For both contemporary and current observers the effect of prohibitions on Cuba's slave population were most pronounced in Cuba's sugar industry as the perception was that all available land and labor had an "irresistible tendency" to be directed towards the sugar economy.[206] According to this perspective the inevitability of sugar expansion translated into the exclusive allocation of Cuba's slaves to the ingenio such that "by midcentury only sugar producers could afford to pay the prices of slaves." [207] In this view, the tightening of resources in Cuba only allowed sugar, Cuba's most profitable economy, to exist as the plantation economy on the island.

But Cuba was not uncompromisingly or implacably moving to sugar production. Thousands of slaves were involved in tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río, and their numbers continued during this period to grow as vegueros expanded their estate holdings. Pinar del Río's slave population statistics in this period demonstrate the viability of enslaved labor for tobacco cultivation despite the push of multiple constraints and the pull of sugar's "inexorable" needs.[208] Near the midpoint of the nineteenth century, the

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Revolución Independentista," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 1994, 405. For a larger treatment of this issue, see Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874*.

[205] Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 193; Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 55.

[206] Mariano Torrente, *Bosquejo económico político de la Isla de Cuba: Comprensivo de varios proyectos de prudentes y saludables mejoras que pueden introducirse en su gobierno y administración*, vol. 1 (Manuel Pita, 1852), 149.

[207] Eltis writes, as a result, the "orientation of Cuban society shifted inexorably toward the ingenio." Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 193. Italics in the original.

[208] Another argument against sugar absorbing all available slaves is that the sugar industry found alternative sources of labor. Between 1856 and 1863, over 40,000 indentured Asian workers were introduced into sugar production, thereby reducing some of the ingenios' demand for Cuba's internal supply of slaves. Moreno, Klein, and Engerman, "The Level and Structure of Slave Prices on Cuban Plantations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 1206.

slave population in the various locales of Pinar del Río ranged from 22 percent of the total population in the town of Pinar del Río to 27 percent in Consolación de Sur, to 32 percent in a subdivision of Guane.[209] After 1850, Pinar del Río's slave population would continue to grow, both as a proportion of the total population and in raw numbers. According to data from the memoir of José María de la Torre, in 1853 the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río had 9,998 slaves (28 percent of the area's total population), while the other central tobacco jurisdiction, San Cristóbal, had 6,548 slaves (33 percent of the total population).[210] In combination, the two areas had 16,546 slaves — a 36 percent increase since 1846.[211] As testimony to the expansion of tobacco slavery in the midst of Cuba's abolitionist crises, a British diplomat in the 1850s argued that once slave smugglers had "crossed the barriers of the law, the slaves were divided into a thousand parts and although most of those went to the sugar mills, more than a few went to the coffee and tobacco estates."[212]

The Cuban labor crisis of the 1840s and 1850s significantly influenced the development of slavery across the island. However, these constraints were not shared equally by Cuba's different agricultural sectors. Nor was the impact an inevitable and exclusive reallocation of slaves to ingenios. The tobacco industry in Pinar del Río and its vegas were positioned, geographically and economically, to mitigate some of the more pressing constraints on its slave population to the degree that this industry expanded, rather than reduced, its use of enslaved labor in this period.

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[209] Gustave Hespel d'Harponville, *La reine des Antilles; ou, Situation actuelle de l'île de Cuba: précis topographique et statistique, histoire, géographie, agriculture, commerce, administration et mœurs* (Gide et Baudry, 1850), 138–139.
[210] de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 118.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Mariano Torrente, *Memoria Sobre La Esclavitude En La Isla de Cuba: Con Observaciones Sobre Los Asertos de La Prensa Inglesa Relativos Al Trafico de Esclavos* (C. Wood, 1853), 68.

Although pressure to abolish the importation of slaves into Cuba would remain, paradoxically, this pressure initially led to an escalation of the number of Africans imported into Cuba. As a result, the last significant period of slave importation occurred in 1855-1865, just before the final Spanish decree of abolition for Cuba in September of 1866. In this era, roughly twelve thousand slaves were imported per year, with a high of twenty-five thousand in 1859-1860.[213] The combination of so many arriving Africans, many of whom would be used in tobacco cultivation, and sustained growth within the tobacco economy effectively concentrated the wealth of this industry in certain areas and among certain producers. As a result, the growth of Cuba's tobacco economy over the course of the nineteenth century was characterized by an increase in the size of vegas. A corresponding increase also occurred in both the overall number of slaves devoted to tobacco cultivation and the number of slaves within individual dotaciones. As a result, the continuing growth of the population of Cuban tobacco slaves further consolidated the institution of enslaved labor in the Cuban tobacco economy. By the 1860s, Marrero declared the argument that tobacco and slavery were "exclusive terms" was "unsustainable," especially in the major growing areas of the Vuelta Abajo.[214]

[213] Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 27(fig. 3.1), 31.
[214] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 11: 58.

Jurisdiction	Area devoted to tobacco cultivation as measured in caballerías (rounded to the next number)	Value of land as measured by cost per caballería (rounded to the next number)	Total land value in pesos	Harvest produced in bales	Value of harvest in pesos	Number of slaves employed in each area	Value of slaves at 800 pesos each
Vuelta-Abajo: Pinar del Río	3,200	1,238	3,960,000	198,000	9,900,000	33,000	26,400,000
Vuelta-Abajo: San Cristóbal	900	711	640,000	48,000	1,440,000	8,000	6,400,000
Semi-Vuelta or Partido	1,716	600	1,030,000	103,000	2,132,000	17,165	13,732,000
Vuelta Arriba	5,553	400	2,221,333	333,200	5,384,200	55,535	44,428,000
Grand Total	11,369	2,949	7,851,333	682,200	18,856,200	113,700	90,960,000

Table 2: Latifundia: The Value of Land and Labor in Cuba's Tobacco Economy, 1861.[215]

Marrero's assertion is largely based on the evolution towards latifundia in the industry where the true extent of this process is reflected in increases in land use and value, capital investment, production capacity, and commodity value. It is also reflected in the augmented value and use of slaves. In general, these developments corresponded to a broad expansion in the overall production of tobacco during this period. [216]

One of the best indicators of the changes in Cuba's tobacco economy is provided by Valentin Pardo y Betancourt. In 1861, the Major General of the Army and Treasury ordered Pardo y Betancourt to complete an official report on the state of Cuban tobacco production (Table 2).[217] In his account, Pardo y Betancourt enumerated several critical

[215] Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*.
[216] From 1840 to 1860, the amount of raw leaf produced rose by 69 percent, and from 1846 to 1862, production levels of leaf rose 82 percent. As measured in libras 1840-1849, 62,889,360, 1850-1859, 106,296.991. Sagra, *Cuba*, 186; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*
[217] The following information comes from the appendix #2 in, Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*.

indicators of the riches of Cuban tobacco production, each of which demonstrate a general expansion in agricultural production, especially in the province of Pinar del Río.

Pardo y Betancourt's report, which referenced data from 1859, categorizes jurisdictions by tobacco-growing region in descending order of importance and quality. It begins with Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal in the Vuelta Abajo. It then describes Guanajay, Bejucal, San Antonio de los Baños, Bahia-Honda, and San Antonio de las Vegas, all in the Semi-Vuelta or Partido, areas within Pinar del Río province but north and east of the Vuelta Abajo. It ends by describing the Vuelta Arriba, east of Pinar del Río Province.[218]

According to the report, much more land was devoted to tobacco cultivation in the province of Pinar del Río than in the rest of the island. The first three jurisdictions, all located within the single province of Pinar del Río, account for more than half of all tobacco land in Cuba. As a result, Cuban tobacco production was concentrated in the select, well-defined, and limited area of Pinar del Río. According to Pardo y Betancourt, the province included 3,300 vegas and 5,816 caballerías devoted to tobacco cultivation; this amounts to 1.76 caballerías per vega.[219] While most historians estimate that vegas were smaller—less than one caballería—the extended average for the Pinar del Río

[218] This is the only occurrence in the historical record where discussion of the Vuelta Abajo is divided between Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal. It is unclear why the separation exists, however, it does indicate how land in this growing area is apportioned and the importance of San Cristóbal within the overall Vuelta Abajo.

[219] For number of vegas, Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*, 15. Also, see this chapter's previous discussion of latifundismo in terms of number of vegas in Pinar del Río.

province is not the true extent of the value of land holdings per vega.[220] Multiple contemporary accounts indicate that traditional tobacco land use by vegueros only represented one-half of actual land holdings—the category specifically measured by Pardo y Betancourt. The other half was traditionally devoted to the production of food staples. When both halves are taken together, the average total land holding was more than three and a half caballerías, or more than 177 acres, per vega in Pinar del Río province.[221] This is a significantly larger average land holding than historians have acknowledged. The true scale of latifundia however, emerges when the value of land is also taken into consideration.

Land values in Pinar del Río province were exceptional. This was especially true in the Vuelta Abajo and the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, where cost per caballería was more than two times that of the Semi-Vuelta and more than three times that of the Vuelta Arriba. Pinar del Río province not only held the majority of Cuba's tobacco land, 5,816 caballerías, but also contained the most expensive tobacco land by an overwhelming margin. The jurisdiction of Pinar del Río alone held the second largest amount of tobacco land, 3,200 caballerías (second only to the entire combined rest of the island outside of Pinar del Río province). Also, at 1,238 pesos, the Pinar del Río jurisdiction has the single highest cost per caballería. This information suggests that the vegueros in the jurisdiction

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[220] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 11; Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 65; Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom*, 134.

[221] Among others see, García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 142; Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*, 15; Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 8 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 281; Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:239, 288.

of Pinar del Río were buying large quantities of land at prices far exceeding all other areas of tobacco cultivation in Cuba. The combination of more land at higher prices suggests impressive wealth and expenditure in this area by the most elite tobacco planters.

Just as land in Pinar del Río province was uniquely valued, investments in this area greatly outpaced the rest of the island. Capital investment in land holdings for the province of Pinar del Río amounted to 5,630,000 pesos. This represents 72 percent of total tobacco-land value in Cuba. Yet, the province only held slightly more than half of all tobacco land, resulting in the reality that land here was valued more highly than land elsewhere. The same divergence from the rest of Cuba holds true for the smaller jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, whose total land value of 3,960,000 equates to slightly more than half of all total Cuban tobacco land value, while its land area was only 28 percent of the total tobacco area in Cuba. Essentially, the value of tobacco land, both within the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río and on a larger scale within the same province, far outweighed the physical allocation of tobacco land in the same areas. This inverse relationship demonstrates the degree to which the most profitable tobacco land was concentrated in a limited area.

Pardo y Betancourt's analysis of Cuba's tobacco industry continues by calculating the agricultural production of each region in terms of the number of bales harvested. And although the specific nature of "bales" as a unit of measure lacks precision here, it is consistently applied across all tobacco growing regions and therefore allows for a

comparison of Pinar del Río province, and the jurisdictions within it, to the rest of Cuba.[222] According to Pardo y Betancourt, the total number of bales produced in 1859 was 682,200, of which Pinar del Río province was responsible for 349,000. The province of Pinar del Río accounts for more than 51 percent of production, and the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río is credited with 29 percent, almost one-third of the island's total production.

Because the report only gives the number of vegas for Pinar del Río province, it is not possible, from the number of bales listed, to determine which area—Pinar del Río or the rest of the island—held higher levels of production per vega (the difference being a potential indicator of large-scale tobacco farming), especially as the two regions were producing roughly the same 60 bales per caballería.[223] However, since the number of vegas for Pinar del Río province was 3,300, it remains that in this area, vegueros were producing more than 105 bales per vega.

This number takes on more relevance when the value of each bale is measured by region. The total value of the bales harvested is listed at 18,856,200 pesos, but Pinar del Río jurisdiction holds 53 percent of that total and Pinar del Río province, at 71 percent,

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[222] Hazard suggests that one bale is equivalent to one hundred pounds and that one bale goes for twenty dollars, although he stipulates this is a low estimate, since many of the bales in the best regions reach as high as four hundred dollars. Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford, Conn: Hartford publishing company, 1871), 333.

[223] The closest data comparison that includes vegas per region is the official census of 1846, which lists vegas by western, central, and eastern regions. It is possible to divide the east from the other two as possibly replicating similar divisions for Pardo Y Betancourt's report. Fifty-six percent of vegas are located in the western and central regions. This implies less production per vega in the central and western sections. And although this is during the same period of aggrandizement in vega holdings in Pinar del Río, implying even further differentiation between this area and the rest of Cuba, the year 1846 and lack of specificity regarding regions on par with Pardo y Betancourt leaves the comparison with the 1846 census impractical. Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,*, 41, 151, 219.

nearly mirrors its total percentage of tobacco land value. It should be noted that Pardo y Betancourt's listed prices reflect an average price corresponding to perceived value in each geographic section; in reality, within each area, prices per bale could vary widely.[224] However, it is possible to ascertain the value he assigns to each section by dividing the value of each harvest by the number of bales, resulting in approximate prices of 50 pesos per bale for the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, 30 pesos for the jurisdiction of San Cristóbal, 20 pesos for the Semi-Vuelta, and 16 pesos for the Vuelta Arriba. The profits attached to the two regions that make up the Vuelta Abajo, suggest that a much higher income is possible in this region than in other regions. This higher income potential effectively separates small-scale vegueros throughout Cuba from the tobacco planters in Pinar del Río.[225]

One of Pardo y Betancourt's more important contributions to understanding latifundia in Pinar del Río was his inclusion of the degree to which slave use was prevalent. Without any equal, the total number of slaves listed, 113,700, represents the extreme limits of tobacco slavery. As such an extreme outlier, it should be taken with a

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[224] Pardo y Betancourt explains that values of bales could range from 25 to 200 pesos within the same region. Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos de Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*, 14–15.

[225] This increase in profits attached to an increase in productive value, especially as the use of slave labor increased as well, corresponds to a similar assessment of the American Chesapeake region by Lorena Walsh, who argues that the larger the plantation, the more slaves cultivated per acre, per worker. Lorena S. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville, VA, 1993), 185; T. H Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution*, 2nd pbk. ed (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001), 35.

related degree of skepticism.[226] However, archival examples, census reports, and contemporary accounts all locate the heart of tobacco-based slavery and large-scale slave dotaciones in Pinar del Río instead of in the much smaller farms in the far east of the island. Judging from these records, if Pardo y Betancourt errs, it is in his overestimation of 55,535 slaves working on vegas outside of Pinar del Río.[227] According to Fe Iglesias García in 1867, there were 42,900 slaves listed in the provincial accounting of Pinar del Río, a number that corresponds to Pardo y Betancourt's 58,165 tobacco slaves within the same province.[228] From these calculations the number of slaves per caballería in Pinar del Río province yield the following results: 10.3 slaves per caballería for the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, 8.9 for the jurisdiction of San Cristóbal, and 10 for the Semi-Vuelta within the province of Pinar del Río. Much like the average caballería per vega, these numbers do not initially suggest large-scale cultivation through the extensive use of slave labor. Yet since vegas in the area averaged 1.7 caballerías, each vega in Pinar del Río was using an average of more than 17 slaves.

While not comparable to the modern sugar mills elsewhere in Cuba, these dotaciones were sizeable and raised their owners' economic profiles significantly. Moreover, Pardo y Betancourt's report demonstrates just how much of that wealth was

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[226] Rivero Muñiz cites the same figures for the slave population based in tobacco production. José Rivero Muñiz, *Tabaco, Su Historia En Cuba* (La Habana: Instituto de Historia, Comisión Nacional de la Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba, 1964), 2:290, n.7.

[227] Pardo y Betancourt's calculation of 58,165 tobacco slaves in the province of Pinar del Río are not far off the general estimates of 40,000 slaves that other contemporary observers arrive at in formulating the number of slaves in Cuban tobacco cultivation. García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 144; Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:572.

[228] Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," 81.

dependent on the use of slave labor. Based on his calculations of the average slave price of 800 pesos, it is possible to determine the extent of capital investment concentrated in the purchase and use of slave labor among these tobacco planters. In all areas of the Pinar del Río province, the value of slaves surpassed all other financial indicators, including land and harvest value. As an illustration of this, within the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, the significant investment of slaves represented a 167 percent increase over the value of harvested tobacco and a 567 percent increase over total land value in the same area. Beyond the vast expenditures in land, the investment in slave labor constituted the heart of tobacco-cultivation operations and the source of the wealth of the Vuelta Abajo. Combined, this data indicate, in Pinar del Río, large-scale operations in Cuba plantation production of tobacco during the 1850s, 1860s, and beyond.

CUBAN TOBACCO SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION (1870S – 1880)

On May 15, 1873, Cuba's Captain General, Cándido Pieltain, a committed abolitionist, spoke about the difficulties that emancipation of the island's slaves would cause for its economy, specifically addressing the severe impact it would have upon "sugar and tobacco, which constitute the immense wealth of this country."[229] That same year, Antonio Gallenga wrote about the effects of national emancipation on Cuba's sugar and tobacco economies; he argued that the critical question was "how to free 350,000 blacks, chiefly African savages, and yet maintain the material well-being obtained by a vast production of sugar and tobacco."[230] These declarations by Pieltain and Gallenga,

[229] Cándido Pieltain, *La isla de Cuba: desde mediados de abril á fines de octubre de 1875 ...* (La Universal, 1879), 226. For a general discussion of Pieltain, see, Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!*, 114–118.
[230] Antonio Carlo Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), 87.

asserting the primacy of tobacco alongside sugar in the most important crisis Cuba's prevailing socio-economic institution faced in the nineteenth century, stand in stark contrast to the almost-exclusive emphasis the scholarship on Cuban emancipation has placed on the role of sugar in this period.[231] However, as this chapter has shown, the institution of slavery played a pivotal role in the tobacco economy of Pinar del Río throughout the initial abolition crisis. As tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río represented a significant part of Cuba's larger plantation economy, their importance would continue over the course of Cuban emancipation, giving legitimacy to the views of Pieltain and Gallenga while also justifying a new emphasis for scholarship on the final stages of Cuban slavery.

Beginning in the 1860s, calls for emancipation threatened the institution of slavery in Cuba, despite the reality that the island's financial systems, including the cultivation of tobacco, were flourishing under a recently matured slave-based economy. Internally, the most important element was the 1868 nationalist rebellion known as the Ten Years' War. With its call to free slaves, this rebellion unleashed a series of events that in the end would result in the total abolition of slavery less than two decades later.[232] The Ten Years' War held few immediate ramifications for the tobacco industry in Pinar del Río, as most of the rebellion was isolated to the east. However, the Moret Law—a Spanish response to the conflict—did challenge to the labor demographics of tobacco

[231] The overwhelming majority of scholarship on Cuban slavery has been solely concerned with the impact of abolition upon sugar, to the degree that the sheer numbers prohibit a comprehensive accounting. However, it will suffice to say that two of the more recent and best works on this subject embody the exclusive sugar perspective regarding the end of slavery on the island. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*; Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*.

[232] There are several works that deal with the early independence movement in Cuba, but for the best and most complete account of the Ten Years' War and its impact upon slavery, see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

cultivation, since the law freed all slaves at and over the age of sixty, as well as all slave children born after 1868.[233] Eventually, the island's continued independence movement combined with persistent anti-slavery pressures from abroad to provoke Spanish concessions regarding slavery in Cuba. This resulted in a new model for the gradual emancipation of Cuba's slaves: the *patronato*, or apprenticeship system.[234] Under this plan, established in 1880, slaves would work for their master for a period of up to eight years in exchange for compensation. The plan also provided new legal avenues for achieving freedom for slaves, including freeing a percentage of all slaves each year until final and complete abolition was achieved in 1888. From the slaves' perspective, this system was a massive success: thousands of slaves gained independence in the very first year, and slaves continued to gain independence so rapidly that Spain declared absolute abolition two years early in 1886.

From the perspective of the estate owners, the evolution of the abolitionist movement in Cuba proved problematic. As in the 1850s, abolitionist pressure led to concerns about a consistent supply of labor. This predominant sentiment left one British official to remark in 1870 that "the labour question in Cuba is naturally considered the one of chief importance to the planter, whether of sugar or of tobacco."[235] This could explain why, in the short period between 1853 and 1862, more than 130,000 African slaves were imported, as well as an additional 40,000 indentured Chinese laborers mostly bound for the sugar plantations.[236] The island was again facing a labor shortage, and as a

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[233] The standard treatment on the Moret Law is, Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*. See also, Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874*.

[234] The best synthetic work on the patronato system remains Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*.

[235] Great Britain. Foreign Office, *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of Their Consular Districts*, vol. 10 (Printed by Harrison and sons., 1871), 516.

[236] Moreno, Klein, and Engerman, "The Level and Structure of Slave Prices on Cuban Plantations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 1206. David R. Murray gives a different figure; he says that 178,852 arrived in

result, its planters were intensifying their efforts to retain the institution of slavery by dramatically importing an extensive number of slaves. Tens of thousands of slaves entered Cuba at the height of its plantation economy, and the majority of these slaves were destined to labor in the leading agricultural sectors on the island. For Fredrick Townshend, writing in 1875, this meant that "the cultivation of sugar, coffee, and tobacco [were] fully employing all the slave-labor now procurable."[237] Yet the allocation of slaves was not uniform across Cuba's slave sectors. As a result of the previous decade's hurricanes, coffee absorbed only a miniscule number of slaves, while a majority of new slaves went into sugar production. However, sugar's need for more laborers was partially met by Asian contracts, which almost exclusively went to the ingenios, leaving thousands of slaves to be dispersed across Cuba's already established slave communities, principally those in Pinar del Río.[238]

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the period between 1850 and 1867. David R. Murray, *Odious Commerce: Britain, Spain, and the Abolition of the Cuban Slave Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 244. Another estimate of the number of Asian workers arriving to Cuba between 1848 and 1874 is 141,391, which compares to 169,000 Africans imported in the same era. Barcia and Torres-Cuevas, "El Debilitamiento de Las Relaciones Sociales Esclavistas. Del Reformismo Liberal a La Revolución Independentista," 407. Lastly, and confirming the general estimates of the above, the following authors suggest the number of Chinese laborers brought to Cuba was 150,000 between 1846-1867, García and Gárciga, "El Inicio de La Crisis de La Economía Esclavista," 363.

[237] Frederick T. Townshend, *Wild Life in Florida, with a Visit to Cuba* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1875), 184.

[238] Interestingly, not all Asian indentured labor went into sugar production. Ballou suggested that as late as 1885 on Cuban vegas "some coolies and some negroes are also employed even on small estates." Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 249. This rare notation of coolie labor in tobacco cultivation a year before final abolition, speaks to the depth and desirability of slave or slave-type labor in tobacco cultivation, even on the smallest vegas. More importantly, it indicates that vegueros employed multiple types of labor, including a significant amount of largely unexplored Asian indentured labor. The example of Don Andrés José Hernandez, the owner of a tobacco vega in Pinar del Río, substantiates Ballou's claim. Hernandez listed among his slaves two workers of Asian origin; Juan, age 16, "chino," and Jose, age 12, "chino." "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de Don Andrés José Hernandez con el fin de inventario sus bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg.109, exp. 513, 1853. See also the criminal proceedings in the vegas of San Juan y Martínez, in which two Chinese tobacco laborers were caught with weapons hidden in a saddle. When questioned, the two individuals claimed that they had not been aware of the weapon's existence, and furthermore that the saddle belonged to a Don Acostas who had either lent or sent the saddle to the two Chinese vegueros so that they could more easily reach his vega later in the week, as they had been hired to

Writing about the later stages of the tobacco economy in the Vuelta Abajo, Paula Arias stated that in the final decades of Cuban slavery, vegueros in this region "already had a good number of slaves."[239] Although Arias does not offer specific numbers, a few historical records reveal the level of tobacco slavery after the first wave of official abolition laws beginning with the Moret Law in 1870.[240] According to official data collected for Spanish officials on Cuba's government in 1869-1870, there were 15,947 slaves in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, which, when added to the 6,325 slaves in San Cristóbal jurisdiction, places the number of slaves laboring on vegas at over 20,000.[241] In a report issued one year later, the slave population for these two principal tobacco-growing areas had expanded significantly: the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río had 25,404 slave inhabitants and San Cristóbal had 7,771 slaves, for a combined total of 33,175 slaves in the two regions.[242] Using estimates that begin with the end of the monopoly and conclude with start of emancipation the number of slaves in the Vuelta Abajo increased nearly six hundred percent between 1819 and 1869-70 and more than eight hundred

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help Don Acostas harvest some of his tobacco. "Expediente sobre autos criminales [ ] contra el chino Julían Hernández y el [chino] Tomas Alvarez, como sospechosos de un hurto […] baile," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 267, exp. 1578, 1854.

[239] Paula Arias, *El Veguero de Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña de Las Causas de La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.*, 71.

[240] Cuban tobacco's value to the Spanish empire remained constant over the period of coming emancipation. In 1870, Pedro Bosh y Labrús, the chief official of the Fomento de la Producción Nacional, a Catalonia-based but Spanish nationalist group, petitioned Spanish officials to initiate unrestricted trade relations between Cuban and Spain, with two important exceptions deserving imposed custom duties: Cuban sugar, because its production by slave labor gave it an advantage deleterious to the free-labor based sugar industry in Catalan; and Cuban tobacco, as the Spanish crown, they argued, continued to rely upon this product for important revenue. Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874*, 150.

[241] Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873: Colección de Informes, Memorias, Proyectos y Antecedentes Sobre El Gobierno de La Isla de Cuba, Relativos Al Citado Periodo, Que Ha Reunido Por Comisión Del Gobierno D. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat*, ed. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat (Impr. Nacional, 1873), 152–153.

[242] "Vuelta-Abajo: Su Situacion Agrícola, Inmigracion, Su Ferro-carril y Los Baños de San Diego," *La Voz de Cuba* (1871): 16.

percent between 1819 and 1871.[243] In addition, according to the 1877 census—one of the last estimates of the region's slave population—enslaved tobacco labor remained a strong institution in the Pinar del Río region, even after the Moret Law. Although this data does not distinguish slaves by jurisdiction or occupation, it does list the total provincial slave population for Pinar del Río at 29,026, the overwhelming majority of whom were destined for tobacco cultivation.[244] These last numbers detail a more than thirty percent increase in Pinar del Río's slave population in the seven year period from 1869-1870 to 1877. In comparison, the number of slaves island-wide during these periods decreased forty-six percent.[245] These figures indicate that tobacco slavery in the Vuelta Abajo was continuing its nineteenth-century trajectory of expansion up to the precipice of final abolition.

THE RETENTION OF CUBAN TOBACCO SLAVES UNDER EMANCIPATION

Concerning Cuban tobacco slavery the previous analysis of Pinar del Río in the nineteenth century provides the clearest illustration of both the existence and profitability of slave-based tobacco cultivation in Cuba's plantation economy. Adding to the viability of tobacco-based slavery in this region and in this period is an understanding of the extent to which tobacco planters in Pinar del Río relied upon and preferred enslaved labor. This can be seen in vegueros' conspicuous attempts to retain their dotaciones until the very last moments of slavery in Cuba before total abolition.

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[243] For 1819 data, see Santovenia, Emeterio, *Pinar Del Río*, 76.
[244] Fe Iglesias García, "El Censo Cubano de 1877 y Sus Diferentes Versiones," *Santiago* 34 (June 1979): 196.
[245] In this comparison, the island's number of slaves went from 363,288 -196,909. Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873*, 152–153; Iglesias García, "El Censo Cubano de 1877 y Sus Diferentes Versiones," 185.

My argument that the cultivation of tobacco depended on slave labor until the very end of the institution corresponds to an older argument about sugar and slavery during the same period. Scholars have long debated the use of slaves in the late stages of Cuba's sugar industry, with the pivotal question concerning the compatibility of slavery with the modernization of sugar production.[246] Beginning with Raúl Cepero Bonilla in 1948, the argument was emphatically decided in favor of incompatibility. Subsequently "every Cuban historian writing about sugar and slavery adopted this same view" according to Laird Bergad.[247] Bergad, along with Rebecca Scott, have since challenged these assessments. Scott effectively argued that on the eve of emancipation, a variety of factors—including the value of slaves as fixed capital and the ability of slaves to perform skilled labor—led "the majority of Cuban planters to shy away from drastic changes in their labor system and take a position quite consistent with their immediate self-interest: the maintenance of slavery and the social structure supporting it."[248] For Bergad, "modernization of processing and transportation made slave labor more efficient and higher yielding"—an argument confirmed by Bergad's analysis of the price of sugar and the price of slaves during this period. Bergad concludes that "far from being incompatible with slave labor," the sugar industry "was dependent on servitude and could not function in any other way."[249] Scott and Bergad significantly altered the traditional understanding by insisting that in Cuba's largest plantation economy, slavery was economically efficient, and plantation owners sought to prolong the institution until the final stages of

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[246] The most astute (and succinct) summaries of this historiographical debate are found in the following: Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 5,n.4; Bergad, "Slave Prices in Cuba, 1840-1875," 632, n. 4; Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 218, n.42.
[247] Bergad, "Slave Prices in Cuba, 1840-1875," 632, n.4.
[248] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 40.
[249] Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 218, 263.

slavery on the island. As a result, these scholars have exhausted the historiographical debate concerning the issue of compatibility and dependence, at least for Cuba's sugar economy. However, this important historiographical concern remains to be explored in other Cuban industries, namely, the tobacco economy of the Vuelta Abajo.[250]

	Year					
	1862		1871		1877	
Province	Population	Percent of Total	Population	Percent of Total	Population	Percent of Total
Havana	86,241	100	63,312	73	41,716	48
Matanzas	98,496	100	87,858	89	70,849	72
Pinar del Río	46,027	100	36,031	78	29,129	63
Puerto Príncipe	14,807	100	7,167	48	2,290	15
Santa Clara	72,116	100	56,535	78	42,049	58
Santiago de Cuba	50,863	100	36,717	72	13,061	26
Total	368,550	100	287,620	78	199,094	54

Table 3: Cuban Slave Retention: 1862 – 1877.[251]

In the last stages of Cuban slavery before the denouement of the patronato system of the 1880s, the institution was experiencing a significant decline. This decline began in the 1860s and resulted in a loss of more than 169,000 slaves by 1877—a reduction in the

[250] The debate of slave viability in the last decades of the institution in relation to sugar represents a much more fecund field, as it discusses issues of efficiency related to revolutions in mechanization, transportation, and other economic developments. For tobacco, these concerns are less relevant due to innate characteristics of tobacco cultivation. Among others, Antón Allahar describes the relevancy of modernization in Cuba's plantation economy as "the industrial development ('mechanization') of agriculture…in the case of Cuba, refers to those processes accompanying the introduction of the steam engine, the railroad etc." Antón Allahar, "Slaves, Slave Merchants and Slave Owners in 19th Century Cuba," *Caribbean Studies* 21, no. 1/2 (January 1, 1988): 159. I do not focus on the "compatibility" versus "modernization" issue that drives a central component of the historiographical treatment of sugar, because the technological and transportation revolutions within the sugar industry do not apply to the tobacco economy, which remained fairly consistent in production techniques even as the scale of production expanded. Rather, the focus of this work is the continued reliance upon and preference for slave labor on vegas because it remained profitable for the vegueros in the Vuelta Abajo.

[251] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 87.

slave population of almost 46 percent (Table 3). This general decline and loss of slaves across the island affected all major provinces in Cuba. However, the impact was not uniformly experienced, and in the context of provincial industries, it is possible to discern significant consequences for Cuba's changing slave population. Traditionally, the historiography has focused on the sugar-dominated provinces (especially Matanzas and Santa Clara) and has argued that because of sugar's dependency upon enslaved labor, the retention of Cuba's slaves was most pronounced in these areas. As an example, in a comprehensive analysis of the slave population during this period, Rebecca Scott concludes, "it is apparent that where sugar prospered, slavery persisted."[252] Yet this is not the only conclusion to be reached with the available data, and in fact, a critical examination of Pinar del Río reveals a similar persistence of slavery in the tobacco economy.[253]

A comparison of Pinar del Río with Matanzas and Santa Clara, using data from 1871 (Table 3), reveals similarity in slave-retention rates between sugar and tobacco regions. In this year, Pinar del Río matched the island average—it retained 78 percent of its 1862 slave population, suggesting that slave owners in Pinar del Río at minimum kept pace with the rest of the island in their attachment to slave labor. And although Pinar del

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[252] Ibid.

[253] While I am indebted to Rebecca Scott for much of the data used here (as well as her work in general), a critical point of departure in our work rests upon her characterization of Pinar del Río as a significant sugar-producing province, albeit one that she qualifies as distant and reduced but still ancillary to the other two sugar provinces of Matanzas and Santa Clara. This is a view that I do not share. Pinar del Río possessed the fewest number of ingenios of all provinces in 1862—just 6.2 percent of total ingenios, island-wide. Although sugar was produced in Pinar del Río (as it was in nearly every part of the island during this period), the area was far more defined by its tobacco cultivation than anything else. For number of ingenios, see Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 133.

Río's percent retention among estate owners was below the rate for Matanzas, it was equal to that of Santa Clara, with the latter two tied for the second highest retention rate. In the first available measure of Cuba's slave population after implementation of the Moret Law of 1879—the initial attempt at abolition on an official level—the tobacco province of Pinar del Río demonstrated a clear attachment to the use of slave labor on its vegas that matched both the island average and that of the second leading sugar production province.

A different set of statistics on the number of slaves in Pinar del Río in the year 1871 further confirms that tobacco played an important role in driving slave-population patterns in the region. According to Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat in a report commissioned by the Spanish government, the two principal tobacco-growing jurisdictions within the Vuelta Abajo (the partidos of Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal) had a combined slave population of 19,599 in 1871.[254] As provincial slave population was 23,865, this left more than 82 percent of all slaves in Pinar del Río to be located within a nearly exclusive tobacco economy.[255] Consequently, this report further underscores tobacco's leading role in the provincial slave population throughout the abolition process.

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[254] Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873*, 153. I cannot account for the wide variation in different censuses' provincial slave totals in 1871. I include data t from this document primarily to highlight the importance of tobacco in accounting for Pinar del Río's slave population.

[255] It is worth noting the correspondence between this concentration and the export sector of the tobacco economy: an increased reliance on enslaved labor over the course of the nineteenth century paralleled continued expansion in exports. One British report on Cuba's tobacco stated that the tobacco crop of 1872 "is expected to be large, and of good quality for the European market; and the prices now ruling are high, and supposed to be rising." This crops prices were "higher than formerly," and the British Consul General stationed in Havana described that year's crop as a "very fair one, and the quality of the leaf unusually good," which contrasted with the "diminution" expected in sugar and coffee. Foreign Office, *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of Their Consular Districts*, 10:516, 512.

This evidence of both retention and concentration demonstrates that slave owners in Pinar del Río mirrored the activity of sugar planters who "in Cuba's most productive province were not abandoning slaves or slavery" in its final years.[256] In the next data year, 1877, Pinar del Río retained 63 percent of its slave population (Table 3). This was less than Matanzas's retention rate, but more than that of the other sugar province, Santa Clara, which retained 58 percent of its slave population. Not only was Pinar del Río the area that retained the second highest percentage of its slaves in the fifteen-year period after 1862, it did so at a rate approximately 10 percent higher than the national average. The sugar area of Matanzas clearly demonstrated a strong preference for continuing to rely on a slave workforce, but the province was not exceptional, and neither was the sugar economy singular in this regard. Pinar del Río, the dominant tobacco area in Cuba, exhibited similar features as it also preserved its population of slaves at a higher-than-average rate.[257]

In fact, the gap between sugar and all other areas or economies in Cuba was not as large as previously understood. Leaving aside Matanzas, where the correlation between sugar and retaining slaves has been established by historians including Laird Bergad, a comparison of Pinar del Río with Santa Clara, the other major sugar province, reveals that at least in the tobacco economy, some geographic areas in Cuba exceeded sugar's

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[256] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 89.

[257] This view corresponds to de Montaud's assertion that "successive price increases in tobacco in 1875 and 1876" gave a resurgence to the industry in this period and allowed planters the means to increase production by retaining slave labor to capitalize upon the increase in profits. De Montaud, "Spanish Fiscal Policies and Cuban Tobacco During the Nineteenth Century," 52.

retention rates.[258] For example, from 1862 to 1877, Pinar del Río demonstrated a positive growth rate in its percentage of the island's slaves. In 1862, Pinar del Río's provincial slave population represented just under 13 percent of Cuba's total slave population. This number did not grow by much across the general period of slavery's decline in Cuba; but it did grow a little: in 1877, Pinar del Río held more than 14.5 percent of Cuba's slave population. This expansion, for Pinar del Río, translated into a 17.2 percent increase from 1862 to 1877, in contrast to just a 7.9 percent increase for Santa Clara during the same period. As slavery declined on the island, it became concentrated into certain geographic and economic areas—notably, those that produced sugar and tobacco. Like Matanzas, Pinar del Río was absorbing more slaves, not less. From this data, the contention that near the end of slavery in Cuba, "slavery became increasingly concentrated in the major sugar zones" is not entirely correct.[259] Moreover, the tobacco-producing region of Pinar del Río approximated all of the retention trends of Matanzas, while surpassing those of Santa Clara. As in the sugar industry, vegueros, until the last days of slavery in Cuba, preferred to continue to use slaves, despite their increasingly limited availability and the rising cost of purchasing new slaves.

CONCLUSION

The use of slaves of tobacco cultivation in Cuba has a long history that begins with the initiation of the slave trade into the island and continues up to final abolition. Slaves were particularly important in Pinar del Río and the Vuelta Abajo during the

[258] For Matanzas see Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 155.
[259] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 88.

nineteenth century. In this area, the use of slave laborers was not only widespread but also particularly privileged. Numbering in the tens of thousands and with continual expansion throughout the nineteenth century, slaves often represented the primary choice for vegueros in the Vuelta Abajo. On many vegas, a significant majority of laborers were enslaved, with these ratios often mirroring and even surpassing those in competing plantation economies like sugar and coffee. These slaves proved to be indispensable for tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río, to the degree that the owners of these slaves attempted to retain them as long as possible, despite Cuba's attempts at gradual, but total emancipation. Moreover, the Cuban tobacco industry relied on slave labor to a degree that often exceeded that of the comparable industries of sugar and coffee. As a result, this analysis, fundamentally changes the longstanding misconception that tobacco cultivation in Cuba was primarily family-based and used paid labor.

Chapter 3: Slave Labor and the Emergence of the Plantation Vega

"We must bear in mind, however, that gradations of suffering face these individuals. What a world of difference there is between a slave who serves in the house of a rich man in Havana or Kingston, Jamaica, or who works for himself and simply pays his master a daily sum, and a slave laboring on a sugar plantation."[260]

INTRODUCTION

In one of the few detailed accounts of the daily routine of tobacco-cultivating slaves, Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, writing in 1851, described the nature of slave labor on the vega *Santa Isabel*.[261] According to Rodríguez-Ferrer, the vega's 110 slaves began their day at 4:00 in the morning at the tolling of the plantation's work bell. They performed chores, *faenas,* including gathering firewood and watering and feeding the vega's animals. At sunrise, they headed to the fields to begin their official work day. The slaves' tasks depended on the needs of the crop, but their work usually included cleaning and weeding the seedbeds and topping the tobacco stalks. Other morning duties on this and other vegas included preparing the land for planting; cutting or pinching off undesirable suckers, *hijos*, from the tobacco plants; and removing worms, *gusanos*, and various other insects. If the tobacco was ready to be cut, the slaves would cut the leaves and carry them back to the drying shed or barn. If they finished these tasks or if the seasonal requirements were light, the slaves of this dotación were assigned various chores until 10:00 in the morning. They then had an hour to have lunch and rest, after which they would return to the fields and work until nightfall. Slaves then returned to their huts, *bohíos,* where they ate and slept until the next morning.

Building upon the example of the *Santa Isabel* vega this chapter analyzes the labor of tobacco-based slaves and the way that the processes inherent to tobacco

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[260] Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 256.

[261] Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...* (Madrid: Colegio national de Sordo-Mudos, 1851), 95–97.

cultivation fundamentally structured their lives and work experiences. This analysis emphasizes the context of their labor, including the nineteenth-century plantation economy in which they labored and the region of Cuba in which tobacco was primarily cultivated. By focusing on the particular demands and requirements of tobacco cultivation, it is possible to identify the unique features of Cuba's nineteenth-century tobacco economy and the ways that these features structured the laboring lives of slaves. Before 1817 Cuba's tobacco economy was dominated by small, family-run farms that predominately used free labor alongside small numbers of slaves. However, nineteenth-century tobacco cultivation in the far western province of Pinar del Río was a different case. At this time, the tobacco economy in Pinar del Río's Vuelta Abajo—the primary tobacco growing region in Cuba—was characterized by an ongoing process of *latifundia*. Increasingly, tobacco cultivation took place in the context of large-scale production processes on extensive vegas with substantial slave populations, and it is these conditions that structured the laboring lives of tobacco-based slaves.

THE HIERARCHY OF SLAVE WORK REGIMES

According to the slave labor historians Ira Berlin and Phillip Morgan throughout the Americas, "masters have tried to exact as much labor as possible from their slaves."[262] However, "not all work required the same physical and psychological application and not all masters drove their slaves with the same ferocity."[263] As a result, a hierarchy of slave work regimes structured the labor life and experience of slaves. For rural slaves universally, the cultivation of sugar was the most intense and arduous of agricultural pursuits, regardless of geography, national boundaries, or time period.[264] Coffee followed sugar in severity, rice and cotton were less severe, and tobacco was the

[262] Ira Berlin and Philip D Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 4.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Berlin and Morgan offer the following general description of sugar: "The work-year of sugar slaves was longer - more hours a day, more days a month - than that of slaves engaged in any other crop. Cane holing, manuring, and harvesting were three of the most exhausting operations known on New World plantations; morbidity and mortality rates were generally highest on sugar estates." Ibid.

least demanding of the major slave-based crop economies. The disparity in labor demands between sugar and tobacco was significant: "the demands of tobacco were tedious and monotonous; those of sugar literally killing."[265] It is in this context that the development of the slave-based tobacco economy must be understood.

In nineteenth-century Cuba, sugar's severe labor regime reached an apogee. The sugar economy relied upon one of the most extreme slave systems of any slave society, ever. One of the earliest observers of this severity was Alexander von Humboldt, who wrote in the nineteenth century that "a measure of the hierarchy of human deprivation can be seen in the threats leveled against disobedient blacks. The *calesero* [coachman] is threatened with *cafetal* [coffee planting], the slave working in the cafetal fears transfer to sugar planting."[266] Later historians, including Franklin Knight, note that while "tobacco farms were thought to offer the easiest life, followed by the coffee plantations"; for sugar-based slaves life "was seen in Hobbesian terms as 'nasty, brutish, and short.'"[267] These sentiments are echoed by other historians, who have labeled the Cuban ingenio as "the last and most miserable step" in the scale of plantation labor.[268]

To understand the labor structure of tobacco cultivation, it is necessary to understand the dictates imposed by the sugar economy, as the prevailing counterexample. According to ingenio balance sheets in plantation record books, Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals offers the following description of the labor requirements of sugar:

1. There were no days of rest as such on the plantations, although legal precepts established Sundays and religious festivals as rest days.

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[265] Ibid., 10.

[266] Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 256. Italics in original. See also, Abiel Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, The Black Heritage Library Collection (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 41.

[267] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 64.

[268] Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez et al., eds., *A History of the Cuban Nation* (La Habana: Editorial Historia de la Nación Cubana, S.A, 1958), 3:304; Julio Le Riverend, *Economic History of Cuba* (Ensayo Book Institute, 1967), 155.

2. There were no hours of rest or free time as such. Free time was eliminated, all biologically available hours being employed in production. This was determined not only by production requirements, but also to avoid life relations being struck up and horizontal communication established within the group.
3. When, for reasons beyond their control, the slave-owners had no productive work for the slaves to do, they devised unproductive work for the slaves such as moving objects from one place to another and then returning them to their place of origin. A slave without work was an element of dissolution for the whole system, a factor of possible rebellion.
4. The workday during harvest time was 16-18 hours during the period of maximal barbarity of the slave system. For the rest of the year, it was 14-16 hours. In 1842, the legal limits to 'soften' the life of the slaves were 15 hours in harvest time and 12 hours for the rest of the year. A planters' commission had this law repealed, arguing that 16 and 14 hours, respectively, were the acceptable minimum.[269]

In addition to Moreno Fraginals and other historians, visitors to the island also saw sugar slavery in its starkest terms.[270] According to David Turnbull, planters across Cuba used the threat of sending slaves to ingenios as means of control.[271] Similarly, Richard Madden depicted these slaves as "wretched in the extreme; they looked jaded to death, listless, stupefied, haggard, and emaciated."[272] Fredrika Bremer said that while slaves on

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[269] Manuel Moreno Fraginals, "Africa in Cuba: A Quantitative Analysis of the African Population in the Island of Cuba," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 292, no. 1 (June 1977): 199–200.

[270] For additional historians, see Ramiro Guerra, who maintained sugar slavery was harsh as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century and Robert Paquette, who understood that in its production requirements, "sugar far exceeded" the labor expectations of coffee and tobacco. Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, 1: 287; Robert L Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 52.

[271] David Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 51–52. Turnbull cites the estate *La Holanda,* where slaves not residing on an ingenio were sent for temporary punishment. Ibid., 277.

[272] Richard Robert Madden, *The Island of Cuba: Its Resources, Progress, and Prospects, Considered in Relation Especially to the Influence of Its Prosperity on the Interests of the British West India Colonies*

ingenios live like brute beasts, in actuality they work harder than "beasts of burden."[273] Bremer attributed these circumstances to the ingenios' work requirements: for six or seven months of the year, slaves were allowed only four and one half hours for sleeping and eating; all other hours were devoted to work.[274]

Largely aimed at conditions on sugar estates, in 1842 Cuban regulations limited the total number of hours that slaves could work and stipulated that all slaves were exempt for fieldwork on Sundays and holidays. But numerous contemporary observers testified to a far different practice.[275] Robert Russell argued that "so long as the machinery held good, there was no stopping, Sunday or Saturday, during the crushing season." Similarly, Anthony Trollope claimed that for the better part of a year, slaves on ingenios were not allowed to take Sundays off.[276] Because plantation life on the ingenios was driven by the extraordinary profits of Cuba's sugar economy, estates operated nearly all the time, and for much of the year, slaves were required to work beyond official recommendations. According to Madden, slaves routinely worked on ingenios for 20 hours a day; one administrator told Madden that slaves only required three or four hours of sleep. Madden asked if the slaves would not perish under those conditions, to which

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(London: C. Gilpin; [etc., etc.], 1849), 161. Madden also noted that on one particular sugar plantation, only half the labor force was fit to work. Ibid., 159. This was not the evaluation of a committed abolitionist who viewed all iterations of the institution in this light, as he was careful to contrast the depictions of the sugar slaves with those in Havana, who appeared "pampered, petted, well-fed, idle." Ibid., 161.

[273] Fredrika Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, vol. 2 (Harper & brothers, 1853), 437. For a similar description, see Sir Edward Robert Sullivan, *Rambles and Scrambles in North and South America* (R. Bentley, 1852), 250.

[274] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, 2: 332. These conditions seem to be her estimate of the average, as she mentions that on many ingenios, slaves were only allowed three hours of respite from every twenty-four of work.

[275] For the slave code of 1842, see Gloria García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 1. ed. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2003), 85. For adherence of these laws, one foreign observer noted these "provisions and requirements are not strictly regarded." J.D.B. De Bow, *The Industrial Resources, Etc., of the Southern and Western States: Embracing a View of Their Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, Internal Improvements, Slave and Free Labor, Slavery Institutions, Products, Etc., of the South.*, vol. XIV, No. 2, 1853, 105.

[276] Robert Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.* (Edinburgh,, 1857), 226; Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main.* (London: Cass, 1968), 134. See also, Antonio Carlo Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), 80.

the administrator replied, "on sugar estates, without doubt, many die."[277] Restricted sleeping hours were not exclusive to the *zafra*, or harvesting period of sugarcane, but rather characterized the majority of Cuban ingenios throughout the harvest cycle. According to Madden, on "'bad estates' - and nine-tenths of the Ingenios are owned or managed by 'hard men' - slaves, out of crop time, have four hours and a half sleep allowed them."[278] Another author wrote that groups of slaves took turns sleeping, such that one group worked for twenty-four hours without sleep, while the other group got "extra" sleep that day.[279] For David Turnbull sleep deprivation had the most deleterious impact of all the tortures that were routinely inflicted upon the slaves.[280] These assessments make it clear that nineteenth-century Cuban sugar plantations embodied some of the most extreme deprivations possible in slave-based economies.

Spanish officials also recognized the differences among slave-labor regimes and the implications of those differences for both slave owners and slaves. On August 23, 1855, the Cuban superior civil government passed as part of a *cédula*, or official decree, rules for registering, taxing, and insuring slaves based upon the degree of danger that slaves were exposed to. The rules noted an inequity between a slave owner who had a slave working as a house servant who was valued at 500 pesos and an owner of another slave, also valued at 500 pesos, who was laboring in a sugar mill.[281] The decree established six classes of slaves that distinguished levels danger, injury, and death within different occupations. The first three categories outlined a number of professions, ranging from coachmen to slaves working on cafetales and vegas.[282] The real divergence occurred

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[277] Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 172–177; Juan Francisco Manzano, *The Life and Poems of a Cuban Slave: Juan Francisco Manzano, 1797-1854*, ed. Richard Robert Madden (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1981), 185.

[278] Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 175.

[279] Demoticus Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes* (New-York: D. Appleton & Co, 1856), 26.

[280] Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 289.

[281] Félix Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año de 1855*, vol. 3 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1859), 1493–1496.

[282] For a variety of indicators that illustrate this point, including the daily routines of slaves on cafetales, see William C. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western

among the last three categories: the decree deemed harvesting sugar cane exceptionally dangerous and working inside ingenios even more dangerous, and working on the boiling processes of the ingenios the most dangerous work of all.[283]

This segmentation of Cuba's slave population according to labor regime and work requirements would recur: in 1855, insurance companies distinguished slaves by age, health, sex, and occupation. The categories of labor included three groups: slaves in the general population, those on vegas and cafetales, and those on ingenios. Slaves in the general population held the highest reimbursement value; those on tobacco and coffee farms held a lower reimbursement value, and those on ingenios held the lowest reimbursement value in every age, sex, and health category. In this list, sugar devalued slaves more than any of the biological variables did.[284] The different slave valuations according to what type of farm slaves were forced to work on indicate the impact specific labor regimes had upon slave health and mortality.[285]

LABOR ROUTINES IN TOBACCO CULTIVATION

Slaves were an integral component of the vegas of the Vuelta Abajo. The most authoritative statements of this fact are provided by a handful of contemporary observers, including the previously addressed statement by Miguel Rodriguez-Ferrer who in his account of Cuban tobacco emphasized that "in the cultivation of tobacco the slave does it

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Cuba, 1790--1845" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005). Levi Marrero offers a counterargument that goes against most contemporary accounts and historical literature: he argues that for slaves on cafetales in the western part of Cuba, the conditions of their personal lives were not much more humane than those on ingenios in the same area. Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, vol. 11 (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 115.

283 Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba*, 1859, 3:1469–70.

284 In an analysis conducted by Laird Bergad related to these 1855 lists, he cites slave prices and values created by the slave insurance company, La Protectora, with the notable example of one prime-aged slave priced at 690 pesos, although his value decreased to 655 pesos as a result of laboring on a sugar plantation." Laird W. Bergad, "The Economic Viability of Sugar Production Based on Slave Labor in Cuba, 1859-1878," *Latin American Research Review* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 102.

285 I do not wish to swing the pendulum in a way that a false binary between sugar slavery is one extreme and all other forms of slavery, including tobacco, represent a fundamentally opposite extreme. If anything, the status of enslavement and the structure of work connects Cuban slaves rather than divides them. Instead, I have attempted to emphasize the nuances within specific enslavement systems and within structures of work that do clearly distinguish disparate slave systems in Cuba.

all."[286] Additionally, Robert Russell in his study of tobacco cultivation in Cuban, American, and other slave societies, reasoned that the organizational requirements of tobacco production "give slave labour great advantages over free in the culture of this crop."[287] In 1847, Russell also wrote about raw tobacco leaf exports out of Havana, arguing "the whole of which is the produce of slave labour."[288] In an official report on the agricultural production of tobacco Tomás Salazar maintained that in Cuban tobacco cultivation, slave labor was not only the industry standard and widely used but also that slaves were a critical part of the agricultural process. Salazar observed that slaves held opinions about precisely how to achieve the best crop while further noting that the best treatment of tobacco seedlings was a topic of speculation among the laborers, including the slaves.[289] Another contemporary observer of tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo, Antonio Paula Arias, similarly remarked on Salazar's contention that slaves were intimately involved in cultivating tobacco in this region; observing the practice of tying tobacco bundles with strips of palm fibers among old slaves who were still using this technique in the 1880s.[290]

The use of slaves in tobacco cultivation covered the spectrum of required tasks. According to the nineteenth-century writer John Taylor, tobacco-based slaves in Cuba were used from the very beginning of the process, which included using machetes to clear the land. The owner of the *Arroyo-Hondo* vega proclaimed that the slave performs all tasks relating to tobacco production: "planting, removes worms, prunes, cleans the

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[286] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 111.
[287] Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.*, 141.
[288] Ibid., 237.
[289] Thomas Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco* (Impr. del Gobierno y Capitanía General y Real Hacienda por S.M., 1850), 18.
[290] Antonio Paula Arias, *El Veguero de Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña de Las Causas de La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.* (Pinar del Rio: Est. tip. de M. Vives, 1887), 53.

trunks, cuts the leaves, hangs, presses and bundles the tobacco."[291] Another author, writing after Cuban abolition, described the very same process of harvesting tobacco: "sowing, transplanting, weeding, worming, budding, cutting, curing, bunching, and baling"; this suggests that during slavery, slaves were indeed performing all tasks that this crop required.[292]

To understand the work of Cuban tobacco slaves, it is critical to understand the ways that the crop itself determined labor requirements.[293] Understanding the demands of the crop is especially helpful because aside from a few limited references, there are no comprehensive descriptions of tobacco slaves' work lives. Though the exact patterns of tobacco cultivation depended in part on location, the consistent requirements of tobacco labor were the primary structuring agent in the work lives of slaves across all slave societies.[294] To understand tobacco slaves' work requirements and routines, it is possible to draw on a variety of nineteenth-century Cuban manuals describing typical processes of

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[291] John Glanville Taylor, *The United States and Cuba: Eight Years of Change and Travel* (London: R. Bentley, 1851), 260; Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 111.

[292] Victor S Clark, "Labor Conditions in Cuba.," in *Bulletin of the Department of Labor 41*, by United States Dept. of Labor (G.P.O., 1902), 700.

[293] In a study of tobacco production by slaves in the tidewater region of the Chesapeake, the historian Lorena Walsh writes that the "requirements of tobacco culture influenced everything," which included "agricultural techniques and the yearly agricultural calendar." Lorena S. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville, VA, 1993), 170. For an American corollary that also supports the use of slave labor in tobacco cultivation precisely because of its cultivation cycle, see Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 164–170.

[294] One nineteenth-century traveler made this connection explicit by claiming that there were no significant differences between Cuban and American tobacco cultivation by slaves. Byron Andrews, *The Story of Cuba* (Washington: National Tribune, 1896), 24. The comparison to American slave tobacco culture remains both valid and useful, because while Cuban tobacco has a longstanding and superlative distinction among all other varieties of tobacco, this is more a result of the territory and conditions specific to Pinar del Río than to the actual species of plant. Tobacco cultivation inherently and universally is conducive to slave production. Therefore, Cuban tobacco production was not different from its American counterpart, despite the arguments of historians such as John McNeil that "Cuban leaf was not suited to slave labor on a large scale" or that tobacco in Pinar del Río somehow possessed a uniquely "democratic flavor to the industry." John Robert McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 116.

tobacco cultivation.[295] Although these works dedicated to the cultivation of tobacco are useful in outlining the potential labor life of Cuban tobacco slaves as among them "in general, there are no great differences from one to another," as one historian has remarked, it must be noted that this similarity extends to a shared disregard for the use of slave labor in tobacco cultivation.[296]

Tobacco season in Cuba traditionally begins in June and continues through September, although the climate allows for a nine-month window during which planters can sow multiple fields at different times to partition the workload according to size of vega and workforce.[297] According to one observer, it was possible in the Vuelta Abajo to

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[295] A comprehensive list of nineteenth-century accounts concerning the cultivation of Cuban tobacco would include the following: José Fernández de Madrid, *Memoria sobre el comercio, cultivo y elaboracion del tabaco de esta Isla* (Imprenta Fraternal de los Diaz de Castro, impresores del Consulado nacional, 1821), 2: 1–14; Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 12 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1841), 338–352; Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 20, 1845, 177–186; Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 5, 2, 1848, 15–32; Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 9 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 277–298; Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 6, 2, 1848, 382–386; Francisco de Frías y Jacott, *Coleccion de escritos sobre agricultura, industria, ciencias y otros ramos de interes para la isla de Cuba* (Impr. tip. de J. Kugelmann, 1860), 239–243; Pablo Fernández Izquierdo, *El Tabaco: Su Cultivo y Elaboración* (Madrid, 1869), 1–11; Lino López Méndez, *Manual Del Veguero Venezolano. Cultivo Del Tabaco Segun Los Mejores Metodos Empleados En Cuba y Adaptados a La Practica En Venezuela...* (Carácas: Impr. al vapor de "La Opinion nacional ," 1883), 32–35; Paula Arias, *El Veguero de Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña de Las Causas de La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.*; Un amigo del pais, *Memoria Sobre El Tabaco de La Isla de Cuba, En La Que Se Indican Algunas Mejoras de Que Es Susceptible Su Cultivo y Preparación* (Habana: Imprenta de Antonio Maria Davila, 1853), 1–54; Victoriano Felip, *El tabaco: su historia, su estancamiento* (T. Fortanet, 1854), 59–79; Anselmo Valdés, *Instrucción Sobre El Cultivo Y Beneficio Del Tabaco, Tal Como Se Cultiva Y Veneficia En La Vuelta Abajo De Cuba* (Guatemala: Tip. Nacional, 1909), 1–62; Alvaro Reynoso, *Documentos Relativos Al Cultivo Del Tabaco,* (Habana: La Propaganda literaria, 1888), 1–110; J. M Santos, *Nociones Generales Del Tabaco: Desde La Preparación De Las Tierras Para Su Cultivo, Hasta Su Definitiva Aplicación* (Santander, [Spain]: Impr. de Bernardo Rueda, 1871).

[296] Vicent Sanz Rozalén, "Los Negros Del Rey. Tabaco Y Esclavitude En Cuba A Comienzos Del Siglo XIX," in *Trabajo Libre y Coactivo En Sociedades de Plantación*, ed. José Antonio Piqueras (Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2009), 151, n.1.

[297] Among the various opinions regarding the planting cycle include that of Antonio Bachiller Morales, who argues that cultivation commences in July, that harvest begins in March, and that in May, a planter is able to replant without much new labor. Antonio Bachiller y Morales, *Prontuario de agricultura general: para el uso de los labradores i hacendados de la isla de Cuba* (Impr. de Barcina, 1856), 158. Carlos Krause argues that the preparation and process of seeding can begin as early as August and continue into February

have two or even three plantings in a year, with a harvest sixteen to eighteen weeks after planting.[298] The cultivation process begins with planting seeds in a nursery or in planting beds, *semilleros*, for a period of roughly 40 to 50 days, during which time the plants remain under cover. They can be transplanted when the plant has developed its fourth leaf and begins to form its fifth and until the seedlings reach a height of five or six inches. During that time, seedlings are transplanted to a field that has been cut, cleared, and plowed. This new land has multiple raised beds or rows to protect the plantings from weather, rodents, and diseases. Customarily, seedlings were planted eighteen to twenty inches apart to allow for growth. To further ensure the best results, it was recommended to plant at midday, on a soft slope, and in a place guaranteed to receive the winds from the Northeast. After one month, the seeds will have grown to a height of a foot or more.[299] Once the tobacco plants have matured and grown to three to four feet, they are pruned by removing the top of the plant, *desbotonar*, to prevent further growth and to concentrate the plant's resources to the largest remaining leaves. This action also produces new buds, known as "suckers" or *hijos,* which required constant removal over the course of this section of the growth cycle.

It is during this period that slaves were tasked with repeated vigilance in the care of the plants. As the plants grew, slaves were preoccupied with protecting them from insects and especially worms, which were a constant irritation. According to José García de Arboleya, vegueros and their slave dotaciones would spend several whole nights throughout the harvest cycle cleaning the leaves of the plants that had been damaged by worms.[300] Insects' interference proved to be time-consuming. In one contemporary account, Taylor suggested that slaves were required to pick off caterpillars until 8:00 in the morning, weed for the better part of the midday, and then return to the search for

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of the next year. Carlos Krause, *Memoria sobre el cultivo del tabaco* (Oficina tip. de la Secretaría de fomento, 1898), 68.

[298] Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 271.

[299] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 2 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1836), 179.

[300] José García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración* (Habana: Impr. del Gobierno y Captianía General, 1852), 144.

caterpillars around 4:00 in the afternoon.[301] But it was the struggle with indigenous ants called "*vivijaguas*" that most disrupted work on the vegas. De Arboleya compared the threat to the impact of locusts upon wheat and claimed that it was necessary to import a special species of ant from France to eliminate them. This measure was in addition to spiritual and public exhortations to rid the region of these pests.[302]

At three months, stems are fully developed and plants have grown to four or five feet. Frequently they are allowed grow taller, but according to standard routine should be decapitated at nine feet. Customarily the tobacco has matured when the leaves have acquired a pale or yellow color, are dotted with small yellow spots, or shrivel and become rough to the touch. At this point, the leaves become darker and are cut, starting at the top of each plant. Ideally, plants are cut after a rain, a few leaves at a time, four or five times over a thirty-day period. The decision to cut the tobacco was one of many that required the considerable knowledge and experience of the veguero: cutting needed to wait until leaves were ripe, but waiting too long exposed the leaves to dangerous weather conditions as well as the risk of overdevelopment and brittleness.

The next step, curing, also involved a high degree of planter knowledge and judgment. At this stage, the plants are cut and left on the ground all day to dry in the sun until leaves are slightly withered. That night, the plants are piled up in the fields. If the plants are not dry enough, they are left in the sun one more day for proper seasoning. Afterward, they are deposited into the drying barn, a shed constructed so that air, but not water, is able to penetrate on all sides. The leaves are separated, hung, and left to dry for two to four weeks. If the weather is cold, practice dictates that fire can aid the drying process.

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[301] Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 269.

[302] García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 144; Un amigo del pais, *Memoria Sobre El Tabaco de La Isla de Cuba, En La Que Se Indican Algunas Mejoras de Que Es Susceptible Su Cultivo y Preparación*, 25. For further discussion of insects concerning tobacco cultivation, see López Méndez, *Manual Del Veguero Venezolano. Cultivo Del Tabaco Segun Los Mejores Metodos Empleados En Cuba y Adaptados a La Practica En Venezuela...*, 32–35; Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, *Naturaleza y civilización de la grandiosa isla de Cuba, ó, Estudios variados y científicos, al alcance de todos, y otros históricos, estadísticos y políticos...* (J. Noguera, 1876).

After the leaves have dried, they are taken down, stripped from their stems, placed in piles, covered, and left to sweat for one or two weeks, according to their quality and the nature of the season. This process takes place during a humid time, because very dry air would turn the leaves to dust. The fermentation process generates heat, so workers must frequently visit the leaves during this time to regulate the level of heat and to open and move the piles as needed to prevent fire. According to guides, vegueros must also be on guard to prevent the heat from destroying the quality of the liquids in the leaf or rotting the leaves themselves. This is the most difficult part in the preparation of tobacco, and there are no general rules, so farmers must rely solely upon experience. In one of the few reports to reference the use of slaves in cultivating tobacco in Cuba, an author from the Sociedad Patriótica argued a slave trained in this process can perfectly judge the appropriate level of heat just by putting his hand into one of the piles.[303]

Although the overwhelming majority of contemporary manuals dedicated to tobacco cultivation fail to address the roles of slaves, this group nevertheless participated in every aspect of this production cycle. In addition to helping with the intial clearing of the land slaves also planted, weeded, harvested, and processed the finished product. Because of their skill, well-trained slaves were indispensable on vegas. Moreover, their laboring lives were determined by the pattern of work that tobacco production required. From sunup to sundown, tobacco cultivation required a considerable degree of effort and exertion. Yet, in relation to other crop economies, tobacco slaves labored under far less arduous constraints and in a manner that was far more consistent throughout the year. The specific nature of tobacco, with its distinct labor requirements and seasonal routines, imparted to these slaves a different labor world and life than that of slaves elsewhere in Cuba.

[303] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1836, 2:180.

LAND AND LABOR IN THE VUELTA ABAJO

Just as Cuban tobacco slaves were distinguished from slaves in other labor regimes, tobacco-based slaves in Pinar del Río as a result of their specific location were also differentiated from other slaves cultivating tobacco in Cuba.[304] In a recent analysis, the historian Charlotte Cosner insists that "Cuban vegueros in all parts of the island used slaves in the production of tobacco, although at no time did they constitute tobacco's primary labor force."[305] Cosner's account reflects a time period where the use of slaves had yet to develop the characteristics that would define tobacco production in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century. Unlike earlier periods and how tobacco was cultivated in the eastern half of the island, during the last century of Cuban slavery and in the Vuelta Abajo, slave labor on vegas was not only widespread but also critical to the economy of this region.[306]

Because the Vuelta Abajo represented the epicenter of tobacco cultivation, not just for Cuba but for the world, the use of slaves was particularly privileged in this region and this feature distinguished its operations from those elsewhere on the island. This was especially true in both the concentration of Cuba's tobacco slaves and the reliance upon this group as the primary workforce. According to a census taken in 1862, the overwhelming majority of all Cuban tobacco slaves—84 percent—worked in Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, the two leading tobacco jurisdictions of the Vuelta Abajo.[307] This extreme concentration left the remaining 16 percent of tobacco-based slaves to be

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[304] Eduardo Torres-Cuevas addresses the connection between geographic production zones within defined socioeconomic regions and their larger integration with the Cuban economy. He notes that of all agricultural products, only tobacco and coffee posses characteristics that are determined by specialized zones of production. Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "'La Sociedad Exclavista y Sus Contradicciones'," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, ed. María del Carmen Barcia, Gloria García, and Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (La Habana, 1994), 281.

[305] Charlotte Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave: The Social History of Cuba's Tobacco Farmers, 1763--1817" (Florida International University, 2008), 92.

[306] Although this later period is outside of Cosner's analysis she does allow for the possibility of slaves representing a more significant proportion of the labor on tobacco farms than has traditionally been understood. Ibid., 93.

[307] The two jurisdictions accounted for 95 percent of the western total for tobacco slaves. José Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno, 1864), 27–29.

dispersed in small numbers on vegas located throughout the rest of the island. Additionally, the concentration of Cuba's tobacco slaves in the Vuelta Abajo corresponded to a significant reliance upon this group as a central component of tobacco's workforce. As early as 1819, slaves in Pinar del Río accounted for almost 30 percent of the provincial population.[308] More than five decades later, in 1871, slaves continued to retain their significance as this group represented 31 percent of all laborers in the two central tobacco jurisdictions of Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal.[309] In contrast Rebecca Scott cites figures of slave use in other tobacco areas that are miniscule, notably in the Eastern Department where tobacco farms averaged less than one slave.[310]

The numerical concentration of tobacco slaves and the high degree of reliance on these laborers in Pinar del Río marked tobacco cultivation in this area as quite distinct from tobacco production elsewhere on the island. However, standard historical descriptions of slave use in Cuba's nineteenth-century tobacco economy fail to distinguish how tobacco was cultivated in the Vuelta Abajo and as a result these accounts have presented slavery in Cuban tobacco as only a marginal component. In the nineteenth century, several prominent Cuban scholars estimated Cuba's tobacco farms' average slave and land holdings. In the first quarter of the century, Ramón de la Sagra estimated that the average dotación per vega was just over four slaves, while the average tobacco estate was approximately two *caballerías,* or slightly more than 66 acres.[311] Two decades later, José García de Arboleya indicated that there were forty thousand tobacco-based slaves on the island and ten thousand vegas divided among eight thousand caballerías of land, for an average dotación of four slaves on a typical estate of less than one

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[308] Santovenia, Emeterio, *Pinar Del Río*, 1. ed. (México: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1946), 76.

[309] "Vuelta-Abajo: Su Situacion Agrícola, Inmigracion, Su Ferro-carril y Los Baños de San Diego," *La Voz de Cuba* (1871): 16.

[310] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, New pbk. ed. (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 11.

[311] De la Sagra does not provide averages for a typical vega but does provide total numbers for land (2,778 caballerías), slaves (23,781), and vegas (5,534). Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas* (Habana: Impr. de las viudas de Arazoza y Soler, 1831), 119–120.

caballería.[312] In 1863, Jacobo de la Pezuela submitted similar numbers to de Arboleya: forty thousand total tobacco slaves and 8,250 caballerías of total land dedicated to tobacco production. However, Pezuela argued that there were far fewer vegas than de Arboleya had estimated. His estimates hold the average tobacco estate at four caballerías of land and eight slaves.[313]

The number of slaves per vega presented by Sagra, de Arboleya, and Pezuela represent island averages that include the eastern half of Cuba. In this area, tobacco cultivation was characterized by independent, family-based, and small-scale farms that mostly used free workers. These characteristics, specific to tobacco cultivation in the east, have been generalized to the entire Cuban tobacco economy and have led historians to underestimate the use of slave labor in Cuban tobacco production and to mark tobacco cultivation as a predominately free-labor and small-scale crop.[314] However, the argument that tobacco was a freely cultivated or "white" crop lacks precision and as is largely inaccurate, especially for Pinar del Río in the nineteenth century.

LAND VALUES IN THE VUELTA ABAJO

The history of the Vuelta Abajo challenges the conventional image of Cuban tobacco as an independently grown, free-labor and small-scale crop economy. As the nineteenth century progressed, tobacco land holdings in the Vuelta Abajo underwent a process of expansion (with smaller farms consolidating into larger estates) known as latifundia. Latifundia was largely a result of the unique quality, high value, and extreme profitability of land in the Vuelta Abajo. At this epicenter of tobacco production, planters changed the dynamic of Cuban tobacco cultivation by employing large numbers of slaves

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[312] García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 144.

[313] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1866), 572–573.

[314] Typical of this assessment, Herbert Klein argues that tobacco "from the beginning was uniquely a small farm, individually cultivated, largely free labor crop." Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (London: published for the Institute of Race Relations by Oxford U.P, 1967), 148.

on large-scale plantations. As a result of the process connected to latifundia the spaces in which slaves labored and the numbers of slaves attached to vegas were also substantially transformed.

This revolution in the tobacco economy of Pinar del Río began in the first half of the nineteenth century, but the Vuelta Abajo was exceptional well before this period. According to historian Jean Stubbs "in the rush of later eighteenth-century sugar expansion, one area had been unsuitable for sugar cultivation" - the Vuelta Abajo in Pinar del Río.[315] Pinar del Río was one of the few areas, if not only area, left uncompromised by the widespread encroachment of sugar that accompanied the expansion of Cuban slavery. This left Pinar del Río and especially the Vuelta Abajo as a unique zone defined exclusively by a monoculture other than sugar.[316] The principal reason this area remained independent of sugar was the value of tobacco in Cuba's economy. This value would increase in response to Cuba's growing plantation economy as tobacco took advantage of increasing numbers of slaves to expand production though this labor force. One of the primary consequences of tobacco's slave-based expansion was a corresponding expansion in the size of vega holdings as increasingly the limited amount of land in the Vuelta Abajo was concentrated among large holdings that were most effectively farmed with substantial slave dotaciones.

At least initially, the processes of latifundia were delayed by preliminary increases in the number of vegas that originated in response to the closing of the monopoly. In an 1843 article on the development of tobacco farms in the Vuelta Abajo, José Cortina compared the current state of agricultural development with its state before the end of the Factoría. Cortina wrote that after 1817, the number of vegas along the Río

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[315] Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15.

[316] Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 21. In his study of Cuba's sugar economy during the era of slavery, Reinaldo Funes Monzote explicitly does not address the region of Pinar del Río because "it was not one of the principal areas into which sugar expanded." Reinaldo Funes Monzote, *From Rainforest to Cane Field in Cuba: An Environmental History Since 1492* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 288, n.24.

Bayate had doubled; near the river San Francisco, where there had previously been no vegas, "not a single inch of land remains unoccupied"; and along the rivers Santa Cruz, Tacotaco, Bacunagua, and Manso, where there had previously been only a few tobacco farms, they could now be "counted by the hundreds." [317] The proliferation of vegas in the wake of the demise of the Factoría can be seen on a local level. In an 1825 court filing over the death of a slave on a vega in this region, the official record begins by stating the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río, but also immediately adding "and the *vegas* of Ríofeo," suggesting that the official proceedings occurred not just within the partido of Pinar del Río, but in the midst of numerous vegas along this river. Moreover, the owner of the slave was listed as also owning eight vegas.[318]

The benefits to tobacco production in Pinar del Río at end of the Factoría are hard to overestimate, as the removal of the monopoly "made widespread…the cultivation of the plant" according to one author in the nineteenth century.[319] However, the same author also noted that this event produced "notable benefits for the state and an increase for the revenues of the Treasury" and it is this aspect that set the stage for the coming of larger farms rather than more numerous farms, as the increasing wealth of tobacco cultivation would subsequently consolidate farm holdings among the richest planters.[320]

This was most evident in the Vuelta Abajo, where the economic growth in tobacco production served to drive up land values. As a crop defined in part by where it is grown and in which soil, location was an important criteria in establishing land values for

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[317] José Antonio Cortina, *Revista de Cuba*, vol. 2 (Est. tip. de Soler, Álvarez y comp., 1877), 2: 254. Cortina also claimed that tobacco farmers were now to be found throughout the Vuelta Abajo in areas where none had existed at all before 1817; he named the areas surrounding the rivers Sagua, Jagua, Rosario, San Cayetano, Pan de Azücar, Malasaguas, Nombre de Dios, Baja, and Macurijes. Similarly, Cortina insisted that before 1817, there had been few, if any, vegueros across the rivers Cangre, Mestanza, Taironas, Llanada, and Guamá, yet in 1843 there were "numerous [people] of only tobacco farmers." Ibid. For additional geographic descriptions of this area, especially its rivers and farms, see José María de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies: Cuba and Porto Rico: Geographical, Political, and Industrial*, 1855, 58; Pedro José Guiteras, *Historia de la isla de Cuba: con notas e ilustraciones* (J.R. Lockwood, 1865), 43.
[318] "Diligencias formadas en virtud de haberse encontrado un negro bozal Félix ahorcado un escalvo de José Maria Rodriguez [ ] los motivos del lucho." 1825, IJC, leg, 224, exp, 1341.
[319] José de Ahumada y Centurión, *Memoria historico politica de la isla de Cuba: redactada de orden del señor ministro de ultramar*, Havana (A. Pego, 1874), 41.
[320] Ibid.

to tobacco production. The same amount of land devoted to tobacco cultivation could produce widely different amounts and varying degrees of quality, and therefore value, depending on its location on the island. This variance was most pronounced in the Vuelta Abajo region of Pinar del Río, where environmental conditions made for the best and largest tobacco harvests in Cuba.[321] In tobacco cultivation, the nature of the land was so important that even within this area, according to one contemporary observer, vegueros distinguished distinctive soils according to varying productive capabilities.[322]

Writing at midcentury, Miguel Rodriguez-Ferrer suggested that most tobacco land in this part of the island was valued at six hundred pesos per caballería.[323] In the same period, William Hurlbert referenced an estate owner who had just sold a "hacienda of land, in the western department of the Vuelta Abajo, which had brought on an average nine hundred dollars" per caballería. Although it is difficult to contextualize the value that these numbers represent, it is noteworthy that Hurlbert described this latter price as

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[321] Describing the aftermath of the end of the monopoly, an 1839 report by the Sociedad Económica concluded that in the Vuelta Abajo, the production values had risen five-fold. Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 8 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 182.

[322] Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.*, 218. For a good discussion of why the Vuelta Abajo was the best land for growing tobacco, including analysis of its soil and the proximity to exceptional rivers, see Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1841, 12:338–341. Part of the expansion story in this region is told in the publication of new scientific methods regarding Cuban tobacco cultivation during the 1860s and 70s, something Ramón de le Sagra had been calling for, based upon the exceptional fertility of the Vuelta Abajo, since at least 1828. Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba: Historia física y política. Introducción, Geografía, clima,población, Agricultura*, vol. 1 (Librería de Arthus Bertrand, 1842), 74. For an overview of these accounts, see the works of Reynoso. Alvaro Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...* (Habana: impr. del Tiempo, 1861); Alvaro Reynoso, *Apuntes acerca de varios cultivos cubanos*, 1867; Reynoso, *Documentos Relativos Al Cultivo Del Tabaco.* The best summary of nineteenth century scientific accounts of Cuban soil can be found in, Leida Fernández Prieto, *Cuba Agrícola: Mito Y Tradición, 1878-1920*, Colección Tierra Nueva e Cielo Nuevo no. 52 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Historia, Departamento de Historia de América, 2005), chapter 4.

[323] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 136.

"extraordinary" yet since this hacienda was deemed to possess some of the "best tobacco lands under cultivation," the value was justified in Hurlbert's evaluation.[324]

The estate values of several nineteenth-century *vegueros* reflect these price estimates and can also been seen in the related high costs attached to the slave dotaciones associated with each property. Located in Pinar del Río, the vega of Don Manuel Martinez Nuñez consisted of three caballerías of land, as well as a dwelling house and a house for tobacco. In 1848, the land and house were valued at 1,000 pesos, a valuation that did not include other possessions, such as various livestock and a quantity of already-harvested and cured tobacco.[325] Land value both matched investment in slaves and justified the use of slaves in this area: Don Manuel Martinez Nuñez held six slaves, with ages ranging from five to forty, with an approximate value of more than 1,000 pesos.[326] As another example, the free black Maria de la Trinidad held a tobacco-based dotación in the same region (though a decade earlier) with similar values: just under 2,000 pesos for five slaves.[327] Equally impressive were the investments of Doña Prudencia Diaz, whose tobacco holdings in Pinar del Río included one vega listed at one and a half caballerías for 800 pesos and another vega of one caballería worth 500 pesos, as well as more than a dozen slaves.[328]

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[324] William Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.* (New York: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 109. It is interesting to note that in a world comparison, the value of the Vuelta Abajo leaf far surpassed its other international competitors with the Vuelta Abajo leaf fetching 4 pesetas, 98 céntimos as compared to tobacco from Puerto Rico at 1 pesetas, 78 céntimos and tobacco from Virginia and Kentucky at 1 peseta, 14 céntimos. Juan García de Torres, *El tabaco: consideraciones sobre el pasado, presente y porvenir de esta renta* (Imprenta de J. Noguera á cargo de M. Martínez, 1875), 64.

[325] "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don Manuel Martinez Nuñez donde su viuda Doña Clara Martinez de Nelosea [ ] una reclamación de un inventario de los bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 132, exp. 626, 1848.

[326] The six slaves were listed as follows; "M [ ]" 29 years old (300 pesos), "Francisco" a Criollo, 20 years old (200 pesos), Illegible, 40 years old (400 pesos), "Felipe" 19 years old (300 pesos), "Luisa" 5 years old (illegible).There are two unaccounted-for slaves, Paulo and Antonio Jose, one of which was most likely the 40 year old slave valued at 400 pesos, and the other most likely addressed on a missing page.

[327] "Expediente sobre autos testamentarios de la Morena Libre Maria de la Trinidad donde se cita a los herederos para el [ ] de bienes tales," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 135, exp. 660, 1838-1841.

[328] "Expediente de testamentaria de Doña Prudencia Diaz para formar inventario / tasciones de bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 90, exp. 234, 1845.

Other writers of this period confirmed the rising land values associated with the growing tobacco economy. For Madden, land in the Vuelta Abajo was worth 1,000 dollars per caballería. José María de la Torre, writing a half decade later in 1855, put land prices in the Vuelta Abajo in the same range as Madden but added that in many cases, an additional cash bonus was required to secure the best land.[329] An account by Abiel Abbott illuminates the rationale for the high premiums that vegueros in Pinar del Río paid for tobacco land. Abbott mentioned being happy to pay $850 for a vega of just one caballería that yielded only an average crop, because the return was $7,000.[330] According to Abbott, the annual profit of tobacco-growing land was estimated at $25-30 per acre to the owner and $212 per acre to the cultivator.[331] This type of return was not exceptional: Martin Ballou argued in the nineteenth century that revenue for tobacco estates would be a minimum 10 percent return upon capital invested per year.[332]

The importance of land in Pinar del Río becomes even more clear through comparison with Cuba's leading plantation economies, sugar and coffee. Historian Laird Bergad describes a cafetal in Matanzas whose six caballerías were valued at 483 pesos, while ingenio land values, he argues, could routinely exceed 1,000 pesos per caballería.[333] This range suggests that at least in the Vuelta Abajo, tobacco land value was on equal footing with other large-estate plantation economies in Cuba. However, Ramón de le Sagra argued that tobacco's land values, which he measured at 3,000 pesos per

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[329] Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 179; de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 58. For similar prices and the use of gold as bonus, see Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:287.
[330] Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 199.
[331] Ibid., 200.
[332] Maturin Murray Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and co, 1885), 249. For Cuban tobacco's unrivaled reputation and singular place in the world market that obviated fear of competition and resulted in almost guaranteed profits for planters, see Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*, 118; Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:572.
[333] Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990), 46–48.

caballería, are the highest of all agricultural economies except chocolate.[334] Sagra's claim similarly justified by John Taylor's description of tobacco cultivation as "very lucrative" and that tobacco was more profitable than any other agricultural pursuit.[335]

In relation to the land value in the Vuelta Abajo, a comparison of capital investments in Cuba's leading nineteenth-century agricultural economies indicates the increasing value of tobacco land in general and how that value influenced estate scale, specifically in Pinar del Río. Estimates from Sagra in 1831 and 1842, Pezuela in 1863, and Pablo Ríera y Sans in 1882 suggest that the investment in Cuban tobacco, measured in thousands of pesos, went from 2,567.4 in 1831 to 4,233.7 in 1842. By 1863, the value was 18,468.5, and in 1882, it was 20,098.[336] In terms of the overall percentage of Cuban capital invested in tobacco the amount more than doubles from 1842 to 1863 (2.2 percent to 4.9 percent) and comes close to doubling between 1863 and 1882 (4.9 percent to 8.9 percent).[337] These measurements of capital investment levels show a significant and sustained growth pattern related to the profitability of Cuban tobacco. Moreover, both the exponential and exceptional growth in Cuba's tobacco economy was largely occurring in response to an expanding slave population in Cuba with a majority of those slaves laboring in tobacco cultivation, located in Pinar del Río.

In fact, comparing capital investment in tobacco and sugar reveals an unprecedented depiction of tobacco wealth that can only be explained by the value and influence of land and production in the Vuelta Abajo. Using the same figures but examining the total percentage of capital investment for sugar, this crop represent 43.8 percent of all Cuban agricultural investments in 1842, 58.3 percent in 1863, and 62.3

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334 Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:239–40. Sugar came in at 2,500 pesos per caballería and coffee, at 750.

335 Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 276, 263. This comparison would also be made in the aftermath of slavery as William Clark insisted tobacco, rather than sugar, was more profitable "acre for acre and dollar for dollar invested." William Jared Clark, *Commercial Cuba; a Book for Business Men* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1898), 3905.

336 As cited in, Félix Goizueta-Mimó, *Bitter Cuban Sugar: Monoculture and Economic Dependence from 1825-1899* (New York: Garland, 1987), Table 26, 155.

337 Ibid., 154.

percent in 1882, which makes sugar Cuba's predominate economy in terms of capital invested. However the rate of growth of capital investments in tobacco far outpaces that of sugar over the nineteenth century. Between 1842 and 1863, capital investments in tobacco increased 122.7 percent; investments in sugar only increased 33.1 percent. And between 1863 and 1882, investments in tobacco increased 81.6 percent, while sugar investments only increased 6.8 percent.[338] Although sugar absorbed more total capital than any other crop, capital investments in tobacco expanded more than in any other Cuban economy, including sugar.[339]

As the nineteenth century progressed wealth expansion in Cuba's tobacco economy proved notable, especially in the Vuelta Abajo where rising land values and capital investments came to define this specialized region. As a result, the increasing scale of operation was the foundation for a larger pattern of expanding farm sizes and slave holdings as land ownership became increasingly prohibited for small-scale operators due to the rising investment costs. Because the tobacco land of the Vuelta Abajo was expensive and finite, vegueros in this area represented an elite class who had the resources, including slaves and property holdings that were necessary to produce tobacco in this valuable area. As seen through capital expenditures, part of a larger development characterized by latifundia, the land that slaves labored on in this region more closely resembled the production scale of Cuba's other leading agricultural pursuits than the small, family-based tobacco farms elsewhere on the island.

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[338] The total numbers, in thousands of pesos, for sugar are as follows: 1831, 52,875.5; 1842, 85,000; 1863, 222,035.7; 1882, 141,485.1. It is also noteworthy, that tobacco was the only crop to maintain a positive increase in 1882. Ibid.

[339] Jean Stubbs argues that in the areas of Havana and Pinar del Río, there was a two-hundredfold increase of capital invested per vega in the years between 1800 and 1862 . This supports a 1845 report by Vicente Queipo Vázquez, who claims that for tobacco, "the bountiful returns it makes to the cultivator relative to the value of land and capital employed, all make tobacco for the island of Cuba a precious plant." Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*, 53; Superintendencia General Delegada de Real Hacienda Spain, *Informe Fiscal Sobre Fomento de La Población Blanca En La Isla de Cuba y Emancipación Progresiva de La Esclava Con, Una Breve Reseña de Las Reformas y Modificaciones Que Para Conseguirlo* (Madrid: Impr. de J. Martín Alegria, 1845), 40.

PLANTATION VEGA WEALTH IN THE VUELTA ABAJO

In conjunction with a reevaluation of the scale of tobacco production in Pinar del Río that results in the acknowledgment of large sites of production, tobacco planter wealth in Pinar del Río must also be reexamined in light of the unique value of the Vuelta Abajo. However, any new analysis of this population is not without problems. In a study of Cuban vegueros of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Charlotte Cosner posits that despite their "rich tradition of agricultural and cultural heritage, today we know little about the everyday lives of Cuba's tobacco farmers."[340] Similarly, although Gaspar García Galló's has asserted that "each vega has a defined personality," it is virtually impossible to distinguish planters by their individual tobacco estates.[341] The lack of specific detail about Cuban vegueros and their vegas stands in stark contrast to the numerous account books left behind by large-scale sugar planters and the detailed descriptions of the massive ingenios that seemed to draw into their gravity nearly every foreign diarist.[342]

Further complicating portrayals of Cuba's large-scale tobacco planters are contemporary and current accounts that have promoted an enslavement-free myth of the veguero; it is this myth that partly explains the lack of concrete information about Cuban tobacco growers as slave masters. In this myth, vegueros are poor, independent, and white, and these characteristics prevented them from either affording or even preferring slaves as laborers. Yet, the reality is that vega owners "included virtually all sectors of society," counting large-estate owners.[343] For example, the owner of the vega *Santa*

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[340] Charlotte Cosner, "Ties of Agriculture, Ties of Geography: Cuba's Isleño Farmers in the Early Nineteenth Century," 2000, 6.

[341] Galló G. M. J. García, *Biografía Del Tabaco Habano*, 2. ed. (Habana: Comisión Nacional del Tabaco Habano, 1961), 64.

[342] For ingenio account books see, Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*; Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*; David A Sartorius, "Slavery, Conucos, and the Local Economy: Ingenio Santa Rosalia, Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1860-1886" (UNC, 1997). For travel descriptions of ingenios see, Louis A Pérez, ed., *Slaves, Sugar & Colonial Society: Travel Accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899*, Latin American Silhouettes (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 1992). For contemporary practical manuals concerning sugar cultivation, see *Cartilla practica del manejo de ingenios ó fincas destinadas á producir azúcar.* (Irun: Impr. de la Elegancia, 1862).

[343] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 20.

Isabel, with more than 100 slaves, listed land holdings totaling 24 caballerías, three of which were exclusively devoted to tobacco; the rest were devoted to corn, pasture, and timber. Additional indicators of this estate owner's wealth include descriptions of long streets within the plantation lined with coconut trees, fine stables and a "luxurious" rooster enclosure; with certain slaves assigned exclusively to these roosters' care.[344]

Other contemporary writers also alluded to the wealth that characterized some tobacco cultivators. Maturin Ballou suggested that Cuban planters of "sufficient means confine themselves solely to the raising of sugar, coffee, and tobacco" and those Cuban tobacco planters held both "large and small" estates. [345] Walter Goodman, also writing in the late nineteenth century, remarked on a Spanish planter, Don Severiano, who "has an extreme partiality for gentlemen with coffee plantations, sugar estates, or tobacco farms"; Goodman also writes of the "lavish hospitality of both coffee and tobacco plantation owners."[346] In a different narrative, Russell argued that among the elite creole class in Cuba, "the great majority of the native born whites is to be found on the vegas and tobacco farms."[347] According to Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, the vegueros of the past had worn only simple clothes and rudimentary shoes, lacked sombreros, and ate only basic food and country drinks. During the age of slavery's expansion in Cuba, however, the image of the veguero transformed to include fine horses, luxurious machetes and harnesses, and "above all champagne."[348]

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[344] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 84–95.
[345] Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 215, 249.
[346] Walter Goodman, *The Pearl of the Antilles; or, An Artist in Cuba* (London: H. S. King, 1873), 214, 208.
[347] Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.*, 164. Russell remarks upon a hotel filled with the families (forty people in all) of the small tobacco planters of the Vuelta Abajo who had come "for the 'sea bathing' that is for the privilege of spending a couple of hours a day, paddling about in three feet or so of salt mud and water," suggesting these are "vacationing" planters, not poor vegueros. Ibid., 105.
[348] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 59–60. See also Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.*, 179. Although this may be a question of periodization, Fernando Ortiz offers a stark contrast to the depictions of Rodriguez-Ferrer and Hurlbert. Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 65.

Byron Andrews's writings in 1880 provide another rare description of tobacco planters and vega operations in the Vuelta Abajo. In a visit to this region Andrews described several planters, including Roman Hernandez y Padron and his brother-in-law, as "immensely wealthy" and "owning estates for miles around," many of which were leased to other individuals. Although Andrews's report does not indicate the primary occupation of these two planters, he mentioned their "castle-like" residence was located in the village of Herradura and in the municipality of Consolación del Sur, the very center of tobacco farming in Pinar del Río. This suggests that the brothers' wealth revolved around tobacco production, as did the dotación that Hernandez y Padron had just sold for "half a million," not including the sixty slaves the family had kept.[349] An 1863 report by Pezuela confirms this possibility: Pezula discussed sugar and coffee farms in his accounting of other slave labor in other regions, but his account of where slaves labored in Consolación del Sur does not even mention sugar or coffee. Pezula further notes that in this partido, tobacco-based slaves accounted for 1,174 of the 2,730 total numbers of slaves in the area.[350] Andrews's account described another planter whose estate included a single plantation consisting of "five miles of tobacco fields," a "two-story style" residence, and two tobacco barns. Owned by Miguel Jane, who was also the proprietor of a tobacco factory in Havana, this vega held one hundred and thirty slaves along with forty hired hands to cultivate five hundred acres of tobacco.[351] From Andrews's account (one of the only existing depictions of tobacco slavery in this region) tobacco plantations in the Vuelta Abajo not only competed with large-scale sugar estates in this late stage of Cuba's slave economy, but their land size and slave holdings also mirrored those of ingenios.

It was not only at the end of Cuba's slave period that large-scale vegas operated. Historian Vicent Sanz Rozalén also notes a large-scale vega of ten caballerías in the early

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[349] Andrews, *The Story of Cuba*, 24.
[350] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863), 138.
[351] Andrews, *The Story of Cuba*, 24.

nineteenth century, while Robin Blackburn argues that "the officials of the Factoría maintained rich establishments, and some founded slave plantations" that would have revolved around tobacco production.[352] Additionally, according to one nineteenth-century observer, the vegas of *La Leña* and *El Corojo,* located in the heart of the Vuelta Abajo, were perceived as exemplary plantations among the "incomparable tobacco vegas" in San Juan y Martinez.[353] It was in these types of large-scale vegas that Samuel Hazard, Garcia de Arboleya, and Thomas Salazar noticed the customary employment of a *mayoral*, or overseer, to manage the dotaciones attached to these holdings.[354]

A further indicator of tobacco wealth and its impact on the size of slave holdings in the region is provided by Jean Stubbs who claims that substantial estates were not limited to individuals, since large-scale tobacco manufacturers owned and operated "large tobacco plantations in Pinar del Río based upon slave labor."[355] The tobacco economy was industrializing in the nineteenth-century, and the proximity between the Vuelta Abajo region and the city of Havana, where manufacturers such as Partagás and Por Larrañaga had factories, lend credence to Stubbs's suggestion that manufacturers owned nearby large-scale, slave-based tobacco farms from which they received raw product. [356] The historians Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García provide one last example of the process of latifundia in the Vuelta Abajo. According to these scholars, Ramón Argüelles Alonso, "Cuba's Railroad King," built his sizable fortune from the profits of a tobacco firm; they indicate that "by making and foreclosing on loans to tobacco planters, he managed to take over vast amounts of land in Vuelta Abajo, Pinar del Río." Alonso's

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[352] Rozalén, "Los Negros Del Rey. Tabaco Y Esclavitude En Cuba A Comienzos Del Siglo XIX," 154; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (Verso, 1998), 498.

[353] de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 59, 74.

[354] Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford, Conn: Hartford publishing company, 1871), 330; García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 142; Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco*, 6.

[355] Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*, 53.

[356] Samuel Hazard confirmed this hypothesis as he noted the Cabañas factory had three vegas in the Vuelta Abajo, and Partagas and Uppmann owned several vegas as well. Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 218. In in the aftermath of slavery, Clark noted Partagas owned 18,000 acres "of the best tobacco land in the Vuelta Abajo district." Clark, *Commercial Cuba; a Book for Business Men*, 231.

experience as well as the listed experiences of others indicates not only tobacco's profitability after the midpoint of the nineteenth century in the Vuelta Abajo, but also the large-scale aggrandizement of tobacco land in this region and during this era.[357]

THE TIMING OF VEGA EXPANSION

If an awareness of where latifundia occurred is important for understanding how Cuban tobacco slaves labored, when the process of vega and slave holding aggrandizement occurred is equally critical for reinterpreting the labor life of slaves in Pinar del Río. The character of Cuban tobacco-based slavery changed dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century, as tobacco embraced the general expansion of slavery on the island. In Pinar del Río and the Vuelta Abajo this evolution held profound consequences for the centuries-old production of tobacco as larger farms, benefiting from economies of scale, absorbed both land and labor from smaller farms. This process of latifundia in tobacco farming was apparent as early as 1829, when one observer described the crop, along with sugar and coffee, as a product grown on "large plantations and which is cultivated by slaves."[358] As with sugar and coffee, the advent of plantation-scale tobacco production on the western part of the island converted farms into fewer, but larger, tobacco estates, with a corresponding enlargement of the enslaved workforce on these vegas. For the slave community in this region, this translated into more slaves being used to cultivate tobacco and a concentration of those slaves on larger estates.

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[357] Oscar Zanetti Lecuona and Alejandro García Alvarez, *Sugar and Railroads* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 436, n.13. In their analysis of the impact of the railroad on Cuba and the sugar economy that drove the expansion of the railroad, the authors point to the Vuelta Abajo as unlike other areas in Cuba. Elsewhere, the coming of the railroad was associated with the needs of sugar production, but at the turn of the nineteenth century, the desire to link Pinar del Río with Havana was based upon "the transportation of the rich tobacco production of Vueltabajo." This tobacco-growing area was so important to the financial backers of Cuba's railroads that the authors point to the profits of tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo as explanation for the "tenacity" with which the project was completed. Ibid., 72, 137. On the vast wealth produced by cultivating tobacco in Pinar del Río, Russell cites the 60,000 pounds that the Havana railway received on a yearly basis only from transporting tobacco in this region. Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.*, 218.

[358] Antonio Bachiller y Morales, *Apuntes para la historia de las letras y de la instruccion publica de la isla de Cuba*, vol. 1 (P. Massana, 1859), 111. Bachiller is quoting a letter written by Don Duarte in 1829.

The aggrandizement of tobacco estates in Pinar del Río took place within the context of the growth of the tobacco industry and an increase in overall tobacco production. In general, as tobacco exports and profits expanded, so did the number of vegas in Cuba. In the Vuelta Abajo, however, the number of vegas remained relatively stable throughout the period of slavery, despite exponential increases in the tobacco economy and in the number of vegas elsewhere on the island. The incongruity between expansion throughout all sectors of Cuba's tobacco economy, except in the number of farms in the Vuelta Abajo, suggests that the economic growth in this region manifested in larger plantations. A report by the Sociedad Económica gave voice to this occurrence as its author suggested that large tobacco plantations are possible only in the right place and where it is both convenient and economical.[359]

Year	Pinar del Río Area	Island Total
1827	2,561	3,534
1846	3,450	9,102
1859	3,047	9,482
1862	2,588	11,541

Table 4: Increase in Vegas in Pinar del Río versus Island Total[360]

For tobacco in the Vuelta Abajo the right place was largely influenced by the right time. A chronological overview of conditions in Pinar del Río help demonstrate when latifundia occurred in this area. Table 4 shows the distribution of vegas in Pinar del Río and nationwide from 1827 to 1862. It was in this period that latifundia was most

[359] Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 1,2, 1846, 226.

[360] For 1827: Louis A Pérez, *Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 107; Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*, 119. For 1846: Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno y capitania general, 1847), 41. For 1859: Félix Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año de 1855*, vol. 4 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1861), 1441. For 1862: Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:213; Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 134.

discernible, yet it should be noted that earlier circumstances preconditioned these developments. According to historian Laura Náter, the segmentation between small and "medium" or "elite" tobacco farmers began with the Factoría system of the 1760s, as Spain's interest in and allocation of resources toward tobacco production enabled some planters to acquire more land and more slaves than fellow vegueros.[361] At the very latest, the distinction between small and large tobacco farmers can be traced to the end of the Factoría in 1817. With the removal of all tobacco trade restrictions by the Spanish crown, the Cuban tobacco industry entered into a period described by one historian as "Don Tabaco."[362]

An examination of the period from 1827 to 1846 reveals the separation between small- and large-scale tobacco cultivation and the ensuing advent of latifundia in the Vuelta Abajo. In this period there were 2,561 vegas in Pinar del Río in 1827 and 3,450 in 1846, This increase in the number of vegas can be attributed to the end of the monopoly and a liberalized and greater participation by tobacco cultivators in an expanding market.[363] However, a comparison of vega growth in Pinar del Río with island-wide

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[361] Laura Náter, "The Spanish Empire and Cuban Tobacco During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Atlantic Economy During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, by Peter A Coclanis, 2005, 264, 272. Lowry Nelson also asserts that the persistence of tobacco cultivation under "large-scale agriculture" in Cuba "began under slavery."Lowry Nelson, *Rural Cuba.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), 137.

[362] Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*, 15. Sagra notes the sizeable difference in the production during the monopoly and after, comparing the harvest of 1811 with that in 1827, during which time total island production went from 371,560 arrobas to 500,000 in 1827. Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:289. Regarding the competing economies of sugar and tobacco, Sagra stated that it is "always a precarious existence for a country that only relies upon industries that are not exclusive to Europe, and not finding in this case the examples of Cuban sugar and coffee to be applicable, it was indispensable to protect some indigenous crops of great value like tobacco." Ramón de la Sagra, *Anales de ciencias, agricultura, comercio y artes* (Havana: Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía general, August 1827), 35.

[363] Tobacco's expansion can be seen in the following data. From 1831-1840 there was a 44.4 percent increase in raw tobacco exported and a 156.4 percent increase in manufactured tobacco exported from 1831 - 1840. In 1830, manufactured tobacco was Cuba's fourth most valuable commodity, and raw tobacco was its fifth most valuable commodity. *Balanza general del comercio de la Isla de Cuba en el año de 1831* (Havana: la Real Hacienda, 1832); *Balanza general del comercio de la isla de Cuba en el año de 1840* (Havana: Imp.del Gobierno, 1841). From 1835 –1836, in terms of export quantities, tobacco saw a 95.6 percent increase while sugar only demonstrated a 3.6 percent increase in the same year. Numbers are in arrobas and for tobacco, only include raw tobacco, where tobacco goes from 26,436 to 51,712; sugar, from

growth demonstrates a substantial diversion between the two areas as Pinar del Río failed to match increases in the rest of the island. In Pinar del Río the number of vegas increased 35 percent between 1827 and 1846, while across the island, the number of vegas increased 65 percent—nearly twice the increase of farms in the lone province.

The different rates of increase become even more pronounced in later periods. In Pinar del Río the number of vegas actually decreased 25 percent between 1846 (3,450) and 1862 (2,588). This decrease is a near inverse of the rate of growth of vegas, 27 percent, that occurred across the island during the same period. In this 15-year period, the number of vegas in the Vuelta Abajo decreased despite the continued expansion of the tobacco economy and increases in the number of vegas outside of Pinar del Río.[364]

A similar trend occurs between 1859 and 1862, the number of vegas in Pinar del Río decreased 15 percent, compared with a national average increase of 22 percent.[365] The trend of negative or limited farm growth would continue over the course of Cuban slavery, judging from writer Juan García de Torres's 1875 listing of approximately 3,000 vegas in the Vuelta Abajo, which would place the number of vegas in this period in the same range of vegas in 1859 – representing a marginal growth rate over a fifteen year period.[366] Cuba's leading tobacco zone was developing much differently, even in this

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4,544,936 to 4,708,670. Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 3 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1837), 471.

[364] According to Ramiro Guerra and others, the period 1846-1868 represented one of the most expansive eras for growth in tobacco exports, especially after 1855. In this account, it was during this period that slaves seemed to be used "for the first time" in a substantive way to cultivate tobacco, meaning for these authors the appearance or the "possibility" of dotaciones of ten or fewer on small farms, and on larger farms, twenty-five to thirty slaves. Guerra y Sánchez et al., *A History of the Cuban Nation*, 4: 160.

[365] The island-wide expansion in the number of vegas would not continue. María del Carmen Barcia cites a figure of 4,511 for island vegas in 1877, a sharp reduction from the 1861 island numbers. However, rather than representing the latifundia that was occurring in Pinar del Río, the substantial reduction in total number of vegas in 1877 more likely is a result of the impact that the Ten Years' War had on the smaller farms located on the eastern end of the island. María del Carmen Barcia, *Burguesía Esclavista Y Abolición*, Historia de Cuba (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1987), 97, n. 71.

[366] Torres, *El tabaco*, 65. This claim corresponds to the numbers presented by Orestes Ferrara regarding the tobacco output of the Vuelta Abajo where its percentage of all tobacco grown on the island was 77 percent in 1876, 78 percent in 1877, 79 percent in 1878, and 71 percent in 1879. Orestes Ferrara, *Anuario Estadístico de La República de Cuba Formado Principalmente Con Datos Facilitados Por Las Oficinas Del Gobierno o Contenidos En Publicaciones Oficiales ... Año I, 1914.*, 1915, 107. As cited in, Grupo Cubano de Investigaciones Económicas, *A Study on Cuba; the Colonial and Republican Periods, The*

later period, from tobacco development elsewhere on the island. As Cuba's tobacco economy expanded, the Vuelta Abajo not only had far fewer farms than other regions of the island but also witnessed an almost zero percent rate of growth from 1827 to 1862; this can only be explained as the result of the aggrandizement of existing property in this region.[367] And because vegueros in Pinar del Río were responsible for much of the production and export increases, this meant that they were using profits to expand their holdings and increase their operations at the expense of smaller farmers.

	Year			
	Vegas		Percent Change	
Jurisdiction	1838	1852	1838	1852
Pinar del Río	436	608		39.4%
San Juan y Martínez	451	573		27.1%
Consolación del Sur	404	746		84.7%
Guane	68	270		297.1%
Mantua	130	136		4.6%
Baja	46	168		265.2%
Grand Total	1,535	2,501		62.9%

Table 5: Increase in Provincial Vegas: 1838-1852[368]

The trend towards latifundia in tobacco cultivation first seen in the period after 1827 (Table 4) was also observed in a report published by Sociedad Patriótica in this period. The author, Don Manuel de Soto y Quintanó, questioned the viability of large tobacco estates in contrast to the more accepted notion of small, family-based vegas, yet concludes that large-scale production did occur, since there were already in 1837 "several cultivators in possession of many caballerías of earth sown with tobacco and workers

Socialist Experiment, Economic Structure, Institutional Development, Socialism and Collectivization (Coral Gables, Fla: University of Miami Press, 1965), 73.

[367] Note, this interpretation of aggrandizement within the agricultural production of tobacco stands in direct contrast with Ortiz who argues the "vega was small; it was never the site of latifundia." Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*, 56.

[368] 1838: Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 7 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1838), 71. 1852: José Canela y Reventos, *Esposición a la Real Junta de Fomento*, 1852, 5.

capable of competing with farms of other crops" on a grand-scale like sugar and coffee.[369]

A more detailed examination of the enumerated vegas in the Vuelta Abajo during this earlier period leads to a conclusion that is similar to that of de Soto y Quintanó and that aligns with the estimates provided in Table 4**.** In six of the major tobacco-growing regions in the province of Pinar del Río, the number of vegas increased during the fourteen-year period from 1838 to 1852 (Table 5). While there are examples of spectacular growth, notably Baja (265 percent) and Guane (297 percent), the two principal tobacco growing jurisdictions, Pinar del Río and San Juan y Martínez, grew 39 and 27 percent, respectively.[370] In these two critical areas, the rate of growth in the number of vegas is similar to that of Pinar del Río Province in the period from 1827 to 1846 (35 percent), yet still remains far removed from the national average for that period (65 percent, Table 4). The data for the two smaller jurisdictions suggest that these two most essential tobacco-growing areas followed the provincial pattern of land consolidation that produced fewer, but larger farms.

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[369] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1837, 4:103-104. De Soto continues his depictions on the growing scale of tobacco production by adding a social connotation, mentioning that in Pinar del Río, a veguero without any workers besides his own, meaning family, is a "disguised vagrant" suggesting that at least in the Vuelta Abajo, the trend was towards larger farms employing workers beyond their family, and operated for profit rather than on subsistence levels. Ibid, 104.

[370] The dramatic growth in vegas of some areas as seen in Baja and Mantua can be explained by the coexistence of larger farms in places like San Juan y Martinez, which pushed some smaller farmers out of the prime areas of the Vuelta Abajo and into the physical and economic margins of Pinar del Río.

	Year			
	Vegas		Percent Change	
Jurisdiction	1852	1862	1852	1862
Pinar del Río	608	887		45.9%
San Juan y Martínez	573	603		5.2%
Consolación del Sur	746	546		-26.8%
Guane	270	329		21.9%
Mantua	136	132		-2.9%
Baja	168	86		-48.8%
Grand Total	2,501	2,583		3.3%

Table 6: Increase in Provincial Vegas: 1852-1862[371]

The same pattern of consolidation among vegas on a jurisdictional level intensifies between 1852 and 1862 with the tobacco economy growing rapidly throughout this decade, but the number of vegas only increasing 3 percent (Table 6). Notably, three of the six partidos demonstrated a negative growth rate, while one of the centers of tobacco farming, San Juan y Martínez, only witnessed an increase of just over 5 percent. In this later period, the overall growth rate comes closer to matching the provincial numbers of negative 15 percent (Table 4).

In contrast to the slow rate of growth in the number of vegas, tobacco production expanded greatly during this period. One contemporary source indicates that Cuba produced 82 percent more tobacco in 1846 than in 1862, and the historian Joan Casanovas estimates the economic value of tobacco as approaching "the total value of sugar exports in certain years," especially after the boom years beginning in the 1840s.[372] In the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s, exports of raw tobacco saw unprecedented expansion: they increased 32 percent in just one year, from 1845 to 1846, and continued

[371] 1852: Reventos, *Esposición a la Real Junta de Fomento*, 5; Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:213.

[372] As measured in cargas, the 1846 value was 168,094, while the 1862 value equaled 305,626. Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.*, 2. Sagra gives figures of tobacco exports in Cuba from 1840 to 1859 that reveal a 69 percent increase over this period. Ramón de la Sagra, *Cuba: 1860; Selección De Artículos Sobre Agricultura Cubana* (Habana: Comisión Nacional Cubana de la UNESCO, 1963), 186. For additional numbers, see Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!*, 18.

to increase over the following years.[373] Tobacco exports would reach unprecedented heights in this period: in 1847, more than 300,000 arrobas were produced for the first time; this level of production was repeated the following year; by 1849, more than four million arrobas were exported; and in 1850, Cuba exported almost double that amount.[374]

While tobacco production and export values were increasing so dramatically, the number of vegas in Pinar del Río remained relatively stable, as minor vegas were combined into single entities. This development, seen both on a provincial and local level, was especially pronounced in areas where tobacco land held a premium value, such as the Vuelta Abajo, because small-scale cultivators did not have the resources to purchase and maintain such expensive land. One specific example of this is noted by José Antonio Cortina who, in writing on the state of affairs in the Vuelta Abajo in 1843, argued that many vegas in this period "grow or expand annually with more frequency than what is believed." Cortina went on to describe one vega that in 1830 was measured as "only having two caballerías"; in 1842, the same farm "had more than twenty."[375]

Another distinct manifestation of the process of latifundia can be seen in Sagra's comparison of total tobacco cultivation in 1827 and in 1842: he lists 2,778 caballerías of vega land island-wide in 1827 and 5,000 caballerías in 1842. This was an 80 percent increase in the amount of land devoted to tobacco cultivation.[376] Meanwhile, the provincial data indicate that in Pinar del Río, the number of vegas only grew by 35 percent from 1827 to 1846, and the partido data indicate that the two leading partidos grew 27 and 39 percent between 1838 to 1852. In relation to Sagra, the provincial and partido data demonstrate that latifundia was occurring in the Vuelta Abajo during the

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[373] As measured in libras raw tobacco exports for 1845 were 6,674,873; for 1846, 8,826,047; and for 1847, 9,309,500. Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba …*, 57–58.

[374] Mariano Torrente, *Bosquejo económico político de la Isla de Cuba: Comprensivo de varios proyectos de prudentes y saludables mejoras que pueden introducirse en su gobierno y administración*, vol. 2 (Manuel Pita, 1853), 278.

[375] Cortina, *Revista de Cuba*, 2:255.

[376] Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas*, 120; Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1: 295.

middle of the nineteenth century as the increase in area devoted to tobacco cultivation was not matched by an increase in tobacco farms.[377] Rather, as the tobacco economy expanded vegas in the Vuelta Abajo did not multiple but consolidated into larger farms.

The evidence of vega aggrandizement (Table 4 and Table 5) challenges Franklin Knight's assertion that "quite probably, the number of vegas did not suffer marked fluctuations after 1846, because tobacco no longer competed with sugar cane either for land or manpower."[378] Knight's claim is based upon a fundamentally false premise that "the total value of tobacco products remained constant" between 1846 and 1862, a claim that is not substantiated by the evidence.[379] According to reports in 1861, tobacco represented 15 percent of Cuba's total agricultural output. In 1842, tobacco had been 3 percent of Cuba's total agricultural output.[380] These figures suggest that Knight disregarded the aggrandizement of tobacco land that characterized the Vuelta Abajo during this period of economic expansion in tobacco.

In the context of latifundia, as the nineteenth century progressed, tobacco farming by slaves in the Vuelta Abajo resembled slaves' work on Cuba's other leading planation economies. In part, this was the result of the region's unique environmental qualities. Gloria García and Orestes Gárciga allude to the geographical specificity of latifundia in their argument that tobacco production was not only a small-scale operation. These historians point to certain parts of the country where estate owners could be classified as "empresarios," based upon the harvesting of tobacco leaves or strains that were more

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[377] Although the difference between the local and national regions for both periods, 1827-1846 and 1838-1852 was not as steep as in later years, suggesting that most of the expansion in size of the vega happened in the later period, this preliminary discrepancy signals an early and more prolonged pattern of latfundism marking the tobacco industry in Pinar del Río.

[378] Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 65. Knight is not alone in this assessment as other historians have explicitly argued against the processes described in this chapter. Herbert Klein provides a succinct analysis of the counter view arguing that based upon the "nature of the crop land…the tobacco farm…tended to be a small, property, or *minifundio* system." Klein, *Slavery in the Americas*, 148, italics in original. Klein would also argue that while "a large number of slaves were employed in the cultivation of tobacco" these were dispersed in small holdings across numerous estates. Ibid.

[379] Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 65.

[380] For 1861, see Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1863, 2:39. For 1842, see Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:299. For an overview and more data, see Goizueta-Mimó, *Bitter Cuban Sugar*, 9.

profitable than those harvested elsewhere.[381] The results of land aggrandizement in Pinar del Río make sense in the context of similar expansion within other agricultural industries, including sugar, in which bigger and more capital-intensive operations framed production during this period. García and Gárciga argue that the larger vegas could "comparatively be as profitable as ingenios," despite a sizable difference in the scale of production between the two operations.[382] As Cuba's plantation economy matured, the island's slave-based agricultural sectors witnessed unprecedented growth, which meant substantial increases in the size of many farms, including tobacco farms in the Vuelta Abajo.

SLAVE DOTACIÓN GROWTH ACROSS THE VUELTA ABAJO

With latifundia in Cuba's tobacco economy exclusively occurring in Pinar del Río and increasing over the course of the nineteenth century it held important ramifications for the slave population in this region and in this period; notably, as land holdings expanded so too did slave dotaciones. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Salazar highlighted the relationship between vega land expansion and an increase in the number of slaves working on these estates. His account suggested that the average size of a vega dotación in Cuba was six slaves, but he also alludes to the fact that many of these slaves, as a result of latifundia, were transitioning into larger plantations in parts of the island.[383] As an example of this, Salazar remarked that he knew of a veguero who bought a vega in 1835; the vega already had a dotación of eight slaves, but the new owner immediately added five more. This owner would continue to add more slaves until he had a dotación of thirty slaves in 1849.[384]

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[381] Gloria García and Orestes Gárciga, "El Inicio de La Crisis de La Economía Esclavista," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867* (La Habana: Editora Política, 1994), 377.
[382] Ibid., 378.
[383] Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco*, 53.
[384] Ibid., 6 n. 1.

This example contradicts assertions that unlike sugar, the nature of tobacco cultivation prohibited the aggrandizement of operations, including land and labor. As the model for latifundia, sugar is exemplary but not singular. According to the writer Lowery Nelson, the ingenio is inadequate as the sole model of large-scale slave regimes: "latifundium, however, seems to be too limited to include all the types of farm organization which are found in Cuba."[385] More pointedly, Nelson suggests that other operations, including "a tobacco *vega*…[which] partakes of the nature of a family farm as well as of the latifundium" should be considered alongside the traditional example of the ingenio.[386] Large-scale tobacco production, especially as performed by slaves, was thought to be contrary to the "nature" of the crop, which seemed ideal for small, family-based production. However, these assumptions proved incorrect. In a discussion of Cuban tobacco-growing, an official report prepared for the United States Congress reduced the question or "nature" of tobacco to "the cost of raising tobacco –and that means essentially the cost of labor, since the development of the plant…is largely a question of efficient labor intensively applied." In Cuba, this question applied to slave-based labor as well: the same author noted that labor was particularly cheap in Pinar del Río because the workforce was "half slave and half free."[387]

The aggrandizement of vegas in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century resulted in the need for more workers per estate, a need met by increasing the enslaved labor force on these larger plantations. Multiple observers noticed this evolution during this period, including several who argued that these types of estates required a labor force of twenty operators.[388] As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, projects were

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[385] Nelson, *Rural Cuba.*, 114. Italics in original.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Department of Commerce and Labor and United States. Congress, "Monthly Consular and Trade Reports," *Congressional Edition* 5503, no. January - March, nos. 340–342 (1909): 89.

[388] Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 199; Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:118–120, 295; García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 142. The scale of production for tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo would continue to reflect large populations of workers per vega, even in the aftermath of slavery, as noted by Robert Porter, who suggested that twelve to forty workers were used in the average

initiated to increase the scale of tobacco production by expanding the labor force on vegas. According to historian José Rivero Muñiz, a report presented to the Factoría in 1800 outlined the cost of supplying a large slave labor force in relation to the profits then available to tobacco cultivators. In this proposal, the author, assuming a vega of 20 caballerías, estimated the associated costs of supplying and provisioning 100 slaves and paying salaries to four overseers at 7,810 pesos annually. This cost was offset by the estimated quantity of tobacco per year harvested by this same number of slaves, a value estimated at 14,400 pesos, which would allow a profit of 6,590 pesos.[389] This one estimate, despite being taken under the Factoría's monopolistic system, illuminates both the viability of slave use on a large scale and the potential for latifundia on Cuba's vegas.

The Factoría report corresponds to an assessment by Gloria García, who notes that in the western part of the island, vegas at the turn of the nineteenth century employed an average of almost 28 workers, a number that rose to 34 workers per estate for vegas directly located in the Vuelta Abajo. For García, the scale of workforce on these vegas enabled tobacco producers to not only compete with the scale of sugar production on some ingenios, but also surpass them, specifically on farms of the same size with twenty or fewer workers.[390] The capacity for tobacco production to effectively use and profit from large-scale labor forces helps explain Antonio Bachiller y Morales's nineteenth-century proposal for an operational vega consisting of 25 caballerías of land and more than 150 workers.[391]

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vega (thirty-five acres, slightly more than the minimum size farm in the Vuelta Abajo under slavery, about 33 acres, or one caballería) before the turn of the century. Robert P. Porter, *Industrial Cuba; Being a Study of Present Commercial and Industrial Conditions, with Suggestions as to the Opportunities Presented in the Island for American Capital, Enterprise, and Labour* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1899), 304.

389 José Rivero Muñiz, *Tabaco, Su Historia En Cuba* (La Habana: Instituto de Historia, Comisión Nacional de la Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba, 1964), 2: 162.

390 Gloria García, "El Auge de La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 1994, 236–237.

391 Antonio Bachiller y Morales, 1838, as quoted in, Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad* (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 11: 59. For evaluations of the profit potential of tobacco: Henry Ashworth, 1861, wrote "tobacco, next to sugar, is the most important source of wealth on the island" while

Similarly, when the author of an 1841 synopsis of tobacco growing in the Vuelta Abajo was asked how much land it took to grow tobacco, he replied that the size of the farm was limited only by the number of workers available. He added that the "intimate proportion" between size of land and number of workers was the deciding factor in all cases, and went on to observe that many planters have cultivated tobacco on a large scale, employing extensive labor-forces.[392] In addition to these reports the historian Levi Marrero provides an important list of large-scale vegas employing sizeable dotaciones. According to Marrero, in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río in 1827, at least 16 (out of 476) tobacco-based proprietors had more than 30 slaves, one farm had 230, another had 123, and another had 113. Six additional owners in San Juan y Martínez each had at least forty slaves in their dotaciones, while the largest plantation possessed 86 slaves.[393] Marrero's accounting corroborates an 1837 report that said that vegas in the Vuelta Abajo were cultivated "with a number of considerable workers."[394] What is particularly noteworthy about these types of tobacco plantation is that their large slave populations were enumerated well before the shift to the widespread use of slaves in tobacco cultivation that Marrero says occurred later on in the nineteenth century.

These initial vegas, composed of large dotaciones, are noteworthy counterexamples to the white and small-scale image that the literature has advanced as the primary model of Cuban tobacco cultivation. In this period, however, their existence

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the American Edwin Atkins claimed that "immense fortunes had been made both in the sugar and tobacco industries." Henry Ashworth, *A Tour in the United States, Cuba, and Canada* (A. W. Bennett, 1861), 58; Edwin Atkins and Jay I. Kislak Collection (Library of Congress), *Sixty Years in Cuba: Reminiscences of Edwin F. Atkins.* (Cambridge: Privately printed at the Riverside Press, 1926), 50.

[392] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1841, 12: 341. Another contemporary assessment concluded, that tobacco is one of the "principal branches…and will continue to command, the untied efforts of industry and capital." Richard Burleigh Kimball, *Cuba, and the Cubans: Comprising a History of the Island of Cuba, Its Present Social, Political, and Domestic Condition: Also, Its Relation to England and the United States,* (S. Hueston, 1850), 208.

[393] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 1972, 11:59. For many of the vegas listed by Marrero, they were equivalent to, and even surpassed the average dotaciones of cafetales who were utilizing forty slaves in the 1850s. Francisco Pérez de la Riva, *El Café: Historia de su cultivo y explotación en Cuba* (J. Montero, 1944), 170–171.

[394] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1837, 4: 91.

was relatively exceptional and limited to the Vuelta Abajo. But as the tobacco industry expanded throughout the nineteenth century, more and more vegueros augmented their slave workforces until slave holdings in Pinar del Río began to mirror those of modest cafetales and sugar estates. An 1839 Sociedad Patriotica report confirms this development: it notes that although "generally it is believed that tobacco cultivation was not able to be the object of grand enterprise," the authors had seen "vegas with 20, 30, and even 60 slaves."[395]

The feasibility and desirability of the development of large-scale cultivation of tobacco can be seen on an individual level in Pinar del Río. As examples, the estates of Doña Prudencia Diaz and Don Salvador Prato present clear illustrations of the potential wealth involved tobacco production in Pinar del Río, as well as the scale possible during this period. In 1845, Doña Diaz owned two vegas—"El Berraco" and "Tedionda," both at least one caballería in size—along with sixteen slaves. This particular dotación included slaves of a variety of ages (ranging from three to 50) and ethnicities (including those born in Africa and in Cuba), while notably, more than half of these slaves were female. The diversity of this dotación was also reflected in the wide range of values attached to these slaves: the most expensive was listed at 450 pesos, and the least expensive, two children both three years of age, were valued at just 100 pesos. This tobacco estate's slave community represented an investment of 4,700 pesos, a total surpassing the individual values of the main house, all farmland, and all animals and other valuables listed.[396]

Among the numerous possessions of Don Salvador Prato recorded in 1847 were three vegas, fourteen oxen, and several mules and horses. Additionally, Don Prato listed, by name, twenty-eight slaves. [397] If this dotación were divided among all the vegas, each

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[395] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1839, 8: 281. These numbers compare favorably with the estimates provided by Van Norman on the slave population averages at 23 per cafetale in 1808 and 75 per farm at coffee's height in 1841. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 131.

[396] "Expediente de testamentaria de Doña Prudencia Diaz para formar inventario / tasciones de bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 90, exp. 234, 1845.

[397] "Expediente sobre memoria testamentario de Don Salvador Prato declarando sus bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 13, exp. 46, 1847. Also included among Don Prato's possessions were additional slaves, including

would represent a sizable farm. However, when combined, the three vegas and the multiple slaves made Don Prato both a wealthy land holder and a large slave owner. Don Manuel Diaz's estate provides a further example. In 1827, as a Pinar del Río veguero located in Mantua, he held 30 slaves who were divided among four vegas, one of which had on its estate a *casa de tabaco*, or drying shed, a storage unit for staple produce and a groove dedicated to plantain production, suggesting that it was a larger-than-average vega.[398]

One of the largest tobacco-based slave holders in Pinar del Río after midcentury, according to archival records, was Don Hernandez. Hernandez owned over 40 slaves, more than the average number per cafetale (fifteen), and near the average for ingenios (sixty), as estimated by de Arboleya one year before Don Hernandez's vega entered the official record.[399] Although Don Hernandez's plantation included other agricultural pursuits, his primary wealth originated from tobacco production, which allowed him to skew his particular dotación, a majority of whom were female and outside of the prime field-hand age, in order to amass a considerable number of enslaved workers.[400]

Tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río as a means to wealth did not just enrich members of the white aristocracy such as Don Prato and Don Hernandez. Because tobacco cultivation in this area held enormous profit potential and could be expanded with relative ease, individuals outside of the planter elite, such as the free black Juana Ramos, could also obtain significant standing by growing tobacco. A testimony concerning her possessions recorded in 1856 included a vega of two caballerías located on the margins of a river in the Partido de Baja, along with the accompanying tools and

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"another negro named José Belen" and Manuel Maria and José Maria Ganga, both of whom Don Prato wished to free based upon their "good service."

398 Additionally, this planter had added other similar structures to some of the other vegas. "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don Manuel Diaz donde la [ ] hijos piden que se haga un inventario de los bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 123, exp. 524, 1827.

399 García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 140–142; Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 48.

400 "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de Don Andrés José Hernandez con el fin de inventario sus bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 109, exp. 513, 1853.

animals necessary for maintaining this land. More significantly, she also owned nine slaves.[401] And while this amassed wealth was not on the same scale of Don Prato or Don Hernandez, it is perhaps more impressive considering the period (a decade later into increasing production and competition for sugar) and more importantly, her status as a former slave and woman.[402] Not only was Ramos outside of the white male elite; she also challenges the stereotypes of the "indigent portion of the rural population, principally engaged in…cultivating tobacco" and the white veguero operating a family farm.[403]

This transformation among small land- and slave-holding vegueros can also be seen on a regional level within San Juan y Martínez, where in 1874 an enumerated list of slaves was presented by slaveowners in the partidos (subdivisions) of San Juan y Martínez for official approval. The list was made up of 19 groups of slaveowners totaling 180 individuals and listed the number of slaves that each individual slaveholder owned: the combined total was 1,894 slaves.[404] This document does not record the occupation of any of the owners, but San Juan y Martínez was one of the central jurisdictions within the Vuelta Abajo, whose vegas owned disproportionate numbers of slaves, so it can be reasonably concluded that most of these slaves were devoted to tobacco cultivation.

Based on this list, the average slave dotación per owner was 11. This number is more than double that traditionally associated with tobacco farms in the latter stages of

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401 "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de la parda libra Juana Ramos en la que lega tierras, [ ], esclavos, y otros bienes a sus herederos," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 14, exp. 50, 1856. It should be noted that Juana Ramos's dotación illuminates one reason individuals of her standing were able to assemble larger-than-average workforces of slaves: an overwhelming percentage of her slaves were outside of the prime and most expensive age category.

402 The example of Juana Ramos and the economy of tobacco certainly confirm the assertion of Berlin and Morgan that "secondary crops created an economic niche that allowed men and women whose color, late arrival, or lack of capital barred them from participation in primary staple production to enter the planter class." Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 10.

403 United States, *Correspondence Between the Department of State and the United States Minister at Madrid, and the Consular Representatives of the United States in the Island of Cuba: And Other Papers Relating to Cuban Affairs, Transmitted to the House of Representatives in Obedience to a Resolution* (Govt. print. off., 1870), 71.

404 "Expediente de los padrones de esclavos para las agrupaciónes [ ] por el Capitán General [ ]," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1473, May 1874-Febuary 1875. For a similar list, see "Expediente. sobre padrón de esclavos que contiene los nombres de los dueños, de los esclavos, asi como, edad, sexo, nacionalidad, del ano 1878 […]." AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1484, 1878

the Cuban slave economy, but it still does not reflect the latifundia that was occurring in Pinar del Río during this period.[405] This is largely because one group of 45 owners stands out as an outlier as this group only held a minimal number of slaves in contrast with the other 18 groups averaging 14 slaves per owner.[406] The 135 owners in these 18 groups represented 75 percent of slave owners in this census. Eleven of these eighteen groups averaged more than 10.5 slaves per owner, and two groups, composed of four owners each, averaged 25 and 26 slaves per owner. Six slave owners, spread across the 18 groups, held dotaciones of more than twenty slaves, while an additional nine slave owners held individual slave dotaciones of 32, 38, 39, 44, 46, 47, 50, 56, and 81 slaves.[407] These numbers illustrate the extent to which large slave populations in this central tobacco-growing region were proliferating as a result of general latifundia and contrast vividly with the stereotype of the small-scale, family production of tobacco by white farmers.

VEGA GROWTH AND THE INCREASED PRODUCTION VALUE OF WORKERS

The increase in vega and dotación size corresponded to an increase in the production value of tobacco-based slaves, with production figures and slave values showing that the tobacco economy more closely resembled cafetales and larger ingenios than the small, family and free labor-based tobacco farms elsewhere in Cuba. Vegas in the parish of San Juan y Martínez provide a compelling example of this pattern and challenge claims that an economy of scale characterizes tobacco farming in this region and period.

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[405] Rebecca Scott puts this number at between 4-5. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 11. A report by Félix Erenchun provides an average of 6.24 slaves per vega in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río based upon 13,347 divided by 2,138 vegas. Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba*, 1861, 4:2262.

[406] The aberration of this one group is further demonstrated by both the size of the second leading group and the average size of all other groups, 13 and 7.5 respectively.

[407] "Expediente de los padrones de esclavos para las agrupaciónes [ ] por el Capitán General [ ]," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1473, May 1874-Febuary 1875.

Production in Kg	Total number of vegas	Total percentage of vegas	Total area of farm in hectares	Free vega workers	Slave vega workers	Total vega workers	Production per worker in Kg
Less than 100	5.0	1.0	30.0	8.0	2.0	10.0	46.0
100-199	124.0	26.1	725.0	126.0	13.0	139.0	164.1
200-499	176.0	37.0	1,083.0	168.0	35.0	203.0	284.0
500-999	109.0	23.0	1,612.0	115.0	135.0	253.0	323.6
1000-1999	38.0	8.0	943.0	33.0	141.0	175.0	301.8
2000-4999	16.0	3.4	809.0	4.0	131.0	135.0	365.3
5000 or more	7.0	1.5	503.0	3.0	96.0	102.0	469.0
Grand Total	475.0	100.0	5,705.0	457.0	553.0	1,017.0	1,953.8

Table 7: Distribution of Vegas in the Parish of San Juan y Martínez according to the Volume of Production in 1863[408]

In Table 7, an examination of the lower end of vegas' production values in 1863 reveals small farms with very few slaves per vega, and those few slaves represent a miniscule percentage of the overall workforce: 2, 9, and 17 percent for the first three production-level categories (Table 7). This corresponds to the engrained image of the small-scale, family-based, and free labor production of Cuban tobacco. But at the large end of the scale of production, the average size of vegas and the number and percentage of slaves on vegas offers a contrasting image. At this end of the production spectrum, vegas in San Juan y Martínez reflect the impact of the general expansion in farm size and labor force that defines tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo after the mid-point of the nineteenth century.

Any examination of tobacco production values in relation to farm size must take into account José Canela y Reventos's claim that while numerous vegas have "large expanses," many only devote a small portion to tobacco cultivation. Reventos's

[408] Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Fondo Miscelánea de Expedientes, 4 120/M, (hereafter ANC) as cited in Barcia, María del Carmen, García, Gloria, and Torres-Cuevas, Eduardo, eds., *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (La Habana: Editora Política, 1994), 481.

assessment suggests that the full extent of vega land value and production cannot be measured by size alone.[409] However, a comparison among large and small tobacco estates does reveal important distinctions with respect to size of vega and production capacity. Considering the four largest categories of vegas in terms of production, beginning with those cultivating 500 or more kilograms of tobacco, the average land per vega for the first two listings are 15 hectares (1,612 hectares divided by 109 vegas) for tobacco farms producing 500-999 kg of tobacco and 25 hectares (943 hectares divided by 38 vegas) for farms producing 1,000 to 1,999 kg.[410] These first two categories exceed the traditional allocation of one caballería per vega, challenging (at least in this jurisdiction) assumptions about production on small land holdings. Yet it is in the last two categories of production where the greatest difference emerges; in these categories, larger landholdings per vega enable large-scale production. For farms producing 2,000 to 4,999 kg, the average land per vega was 51 hectares (809 hectares divided by 16 vegas), and for farms producing 5,000 or more kg, the average was 72 hectares (503 total hectares divided by seven vegas), which amounts to approximately four and five caballerías respectively. Traditionally Cuban vegas are assumed to be much smaller—one caballería or less—but in these categories, farm sizes were substantially larger than this.

In terms of average landholding size, these vegas are between Cuba's leading plantation economies of coffee and sugar. According to a contemporary observer, cafetales averaged 100 to 1000 acres and ingenios averaged 500 to 10,000 acres, with "one of the finest ingenios" measuring 3,000 acres.[411] For the vegas in San Juan y Martínez, the largest two categories—averaging 51 hectares and 72 hectares—translate into average land holdings of 125 and 178 acres respectively, making these vegas

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[409] Reventos, *Esposición a la Real Junta de Fomento*, 5. Instead, it was customary for tobacco planters to devote a significant percentage of their land to cultivation of food and other staple economies, which for larger vegas was a principal means of sustaining their slave dotaciones, rather than have food imported into the estates, as owners of sugar mills traditionally did. This aspect of vega land allotment is addressed in chapter five.

[410] One caballería equals 33.16 acres. One hectare equals 2.47 acres, and 13.42 hectares are approximately 1 caballería.

[411] Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 351, 48.

commensurate with cafetales yet smaller than most ingenios. Larger vegas also existed in this region, many which were comparable in size to the largest ingenios, as noted by Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, who stated that there were "many vegas" measuring between "5 to 100 caballerías" (approximately 165 to 3,316 acres) in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century.[412]

In terms of overall numbers, the four largest categories of vegas in Table 7 represent 36 percent of all farms, a surprisingly high number when considering the range of difference between the smallest listing in this category and the largest (those producing less than 100 kg and those producing 5,000 or more kg). In this region, these were tobacco farms of considerable production capacity and size. The relationship between tobacco and slavery is also affected by the size and scale of each farm. The clear majority of slaves, 91 percent resided within the four largest production categories. The three smallest categories, by contrast, include 64 percent of all farms yet only account for nine percent of all slaves. Clearly, the largest vegas, especially as their capacity increased, absorbed a disproportionate number of the slaves in the area. In the 500 – 999 kg category 53 percent of the workforce was enslaved.[413] Even at this low level of production, more than half of all workers on these 109 vegas were slaves.

With each increase in production capacity, the percentage of slaves escalates significantly. In the next range, 1,000-1,999 kg, 80 percent of workers were enslaved.[414] Even more noteworthy is the use of slaves in the two highest categories of production. In these last two categories, vegas relied almost solely upon slaves: the second-to-last category, 2,000 – 4,999 kg, enslaved 97 percent of its workforce while the last category,

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[412] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 136. Andrews mentions one vega of five hundred acres putting it on level with small ingenios. Andrews, *The Story of Cuba*, 24.

[413] In this category, there are an additional three free black workers listed, which accounts for the 253 total workers.

[414] For comparative value, it is worth noting that this percentage actually surpasses that of slaves working on ingenios in the same period. In a similar area of crop concentration, such as the sugar-based economy of Matanzas, slaves represented slightly more than 70 percent of the laborers on ingenios in the region. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 155.

5,000 or more kg, enslaved 94 percent.[415] Chapter two explained that in the Vuelta Abajo in 1838, slaves could range from 60 to 90 percent of the total workforce in certain partidos. Table 4 indicates that this trend continued through 1863, and also presents numbers that are unrivaled in other Cuban slave economies, including sugar.[416]

Moreover, these highest-producing farms also had the highest average number of slaves per farm, reaching a peak of 14 slaves per vega in the 5,000 kg or more production category. They also had a higher percentage of production per worker: farms with a workforce that averaged 94 slaves produced more than ten times as much per worker than a farm that only enslaved 20 percent of its workers (469 versus 46 kg per worker).[417] In San Juan y Martínez, tobacco production by slaves was a predominant feature of vegas with substantial capacity, large areas of farm land, and sizeable slave dotaciones, with the highest concentrations of slaves as part of the workforce concentrated in the largest and most productive vega. This information suggests that in these farms, the use of and dependence upon slave labor was unparalleled, both within the tobacco economy and in other plantation-based economies in Cuba.

THE VALUE OF CUBAN TOBACCO PRODUCTION VERSUS SUGAR AND COFFEE

As a measure of the feasibility of using slaves to cultivate tobacco, the production per enslaved worker for tobacco is higher than in Cuba's other two leading agricultural crops, coffee and sugar. An additional avenue that underscores the impact of latifundia on Cuban vegas is seen in the monetary value per worker which exceeds that of the other industries in terms of both the average for all vegas and the average for the two largest categories of farms.

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[415] In this category, there are an additional three free black workers listed, which accounts for the 102 total workers.

[416] Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 155.

[417] For comparison with another slave-based tobacco economy, the 469 kg of tobacco produced per slave in Pinar del Río, when converted to pounds at 1,034, is almost equivalent to the highest recorded level of 1,579 lbs. of tobacco produced per slave labor in the nineteenth century of the American region. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," 175.

Value in pesos	Number of vegas	Total workers per vega	Total "slave" workers per vega	Value per worker in pesos
0-199	175.00	192.00	12.00	146.34
200-499	207.00	328.00	119.00	207.30
500-999	52.00	164.00	114.00	219.09
1000-1999	27.00	151.00	134.00	248.11
2000-4999	14.00	182.00	174.00	250.37

Table 8: Distribution of Tobacco Farms in San Juan y Martínez and the Gross Value of Production: 1863[418]

Comparing tobacco's competitors in this context reveals the average production of tobacco per worker was 214 pesos, compared to an average of 56 for coffee and 109.68 for sugar (Tables 8, 9 and 10).[419] Admittedly, this does not take into account the many free laborers in tobacco. However, assuming that the two largest categories represent the apex of slave use in each sector, tobacco again far outpaces its competitors in terms of production value per slave. In tobacco's second most valuable category (1000 to 1999 pesos) 89 percent of the workforce was enslaved with each member of the workforce accounting for 248 pesos. The largest category in terms of value (2000 to 4999 pesos) has an even higher majority of slaves, 96 percent and each slave produces, on average, 250 pesos.

[418] ANC, Fondo Gobierno General, 512 / 26 445 as cited in Barcia, María del Carmen, García, Gloria, and Torres-Cuevas, Eduardo, *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, 485.

[419] Inexplicably, the authors of this report give the following averages per worker: for tobacco, 211.46; for coffee, 65.81; and for sugar, 144.96. Ibid., 482–485 .

Value in pesos	Number of cafetales	Total workers per cafetale	Total "slave" workers per cafetale	Value per worker in cafetale
0-499	3.00	28.00	28.00	35.21
500-999	7.00	117.00	114.00	49.56
1000-1999	6.00	223.00	217.00	38.91
2000-4999	31.00	1,711.00	1,673.00	57.43
5000-9999	17.00	1,269.00	1,243.00	81.73
10000-24999	2.00	306.00	300.00	75.35

Table 9: Distribution of Coffee Farms in Guantánamo and the Gross Value of Production: 1861[420]

For coffee, each category included a slave dotación of 98 percent, and the two highest monetary values were 81.73 and 75.35, a significantly lower value per enslaved worker than tobacco (see Table 9). In this comparison, the contrast between tobacco and coffee is less striking but still noteworthy.

Value in pesos	Number of ingenios	Total workers per ingenio	Total "slave" workers per ingenio	Value per worker in ingenio
0-499	3.00	22.00	21.00	47.55
500-999	3.00	17.00	14.00	132.94
1000-4999	19.00	479.00	400.00	117.07
5000-9999	3.00	283.00	269.00	74.91
10000-24999	30.00	3,377.00	3,065.00	144.28
25000-49999	16.00	3,448.00	3,261.00	148.58
50000 or more	1.00	239.00	230.00	251.05

Table 10: Distribution of Ingenios in Various Parishes in Cuba and the Gross Value of Production: 1861[421]

[420] ANC, Fondo Gobierno General, 388 / 18 510 and 18 511 as cited in, Ibid., 484.
[421] ANC, Fondo Gobierno General, 388 / 18 510, and 18 511, 562 / 27 528, 436 / 21 090, 562 / 27 527, 478 / 23 541 as cited in, Ibid., 483.

In the larger amalgamated listings of ingenios across the island, the sugar economy's value per worker in the highest categories of slave concentration, 95 and 96 percent, either was significantly less than or approximately equal to that of tobacco: 148.58 and 251.05 pesos per worker, respectively (Table 10).

Value in pesos	Number of ingenios	Total workers per ingenio	Total "slave" workers per ingenio	Value per worker in ingenio
0-4999	7.00	197.00	143.00	135.67
5000-9999	5.00	190.00	182.00	231.05
10000-24999	24.00	2,124.00	1,757.00	197.36
25000-49999	23.00	3,368.00	2,320.00	256.52
50000-99999	43.00	12,621.00	9,474.00	230.51
100000 or more	20.00	9,569.00	7,763.00	282.26

Table 11: Distribution of Ingenios in Colón and the Gross Value of Production: 1859[422]

For sugar, a comparison between the central tobacco region of San Juan y Martínez and the jurisdiction of Colón, in the center of Matanzas, mirrors the model of ingenios island wide: values of output per worker in the two largest categories are 230 (50,000 to 99,000 kg) and 282 pesos per worker (Table 11).[423] These are consistent with the corresponding values for tobacco, but the ingenios in Colón in the 1859 use smaller percentages of slaves—just 75 percent and 81 percent in comparison with the vegas of San Juan y Martínez and the cafetales of Guantánamo. At the very least, however, this confirms that sugar and tobacco slaves produced similar value per enslaved worker in the last decades of slavery.[424] This argument was shared by one late nineteenth-century

[422] ANC: Miscelánea de expedientes, 4 120/M - as cited in Ibid., 482.

[423] These numbers are reduced to 98.57 and 123.98, respectively, when adjusted for gross value.

[424] Although David Eltis does not consider Cuban tobacco slavery a viable competitor to Cuba's other agricultural export crops, it is possible to make comparisons in an international context, including Brazil, Britain, and the United States. According to Eltis, production per slave, among these countries, was highest on Cuban sugar plantations. David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 189–191.

writer who suggests that the estimates of monetary yield per caballería were as follows: sugar at $2,500, coffee at $ 750, and tobacco at $3,000, leaving tobacco as the most profitable crop in Cuba in terms of production yield per estate.[425]

The example of sugar estates in Colón offers another valuable comparison with slave holdings on vegas. Colón was arguably one of the most developed regions in terms of sugar production in the second half of the nineteenth century. Fe Iglesias García compiled a list of the ingenios in this area that included their size and number of slaves; remarkably, this list demonstrates a concentration of smaller ingenios rather than the standard model of large plantations that dominate the depiction of sugar production in Cuba.[426] In 1860, a majority of sugar planters in Colón held between one and fifty slaves, a category that also represented the largest percentage (26) and which far exceeded the next largest percentage (16), which included ingenios of 101-150 slaves. In this year and region, the largest number and percentage of ingenios only devoted one to ten caballerías of land to sugar.[427] This association between size and slave distribution continued in 1877, as a majority of sugar planters in Colón, almost one-third, again held from 1 to 50 slaves.[428] These figures suggest that massive ingenios with hundreds of slaves and hundreds of caballerías were not representative of most ingenios in this region during the late stages of Cuban slavery. Instead, a majority of ingenios resembled the large vega plantations in the Vuelta Abajo at the same point in Cuba's plantation economy.

There are some limitations to these comparisons among vegas, ingenios, and cafetales, especially as production capacities are all measured on different scales of weight and value. Additionally, this period occurs in the aftermath of coffee's once prominent position in Cuba's economy. Further complicating comparisons, sugar and

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[425] Maturin Murray Ballou, *History of Cuba: Or, Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics ; Being a Political, Historical, and Statistical Account of the Island, from Its First Discovery to the Present Time* (Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1854), 153. The value of tobacco is not only higher than that of sugar but also represents the second highest total, next to cacao, of the ten main crops listed.
[426] Fe Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba* (Editorial Academia, 1986), 67.
[427] Ibid., 68.
[428] Ibid., 69.

tobacco use different mills and technology, and the comparisons are not adjusted to account for these differences. However, for the study of slavery comparisons of value for labor remain viable because they draw on percentage of slave workers and value produced per worker. Therefore, within this comparative context it is apparent that a majority of vegas used slavery extensively, and it is equally apparent that larger and more productive vegas used slave labor almost exclusively. Morevoer, tobacco slaves proved more economically valuable than coffee and sugar slaves in San Juan y Martínez in 1863, while high levels of output per worker justified vegueros' dependence on slaves in this region.[429]

CONCLUSION

The inherent requirements of tobacco cultivation determined the parameters of slave life and labor in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century. The crop governed patterns of land and labor use. It governed how slaves labored—the organization and type of work they were required to do. It governed where they labored—the place of cultivation. And it governed when they labored—both in the timing and duration of their work and in the point in Cuban history in which slaves found themselves bound to this labor regime.

In the Vuelta Abajo of the nineteenth century, slaves were unequivocally entwined "in the cultivation of tobacco [as] the slave does it all, planting, removes worms, prunes, cleans the trunks, cuts the leaves, hangs, presses and bundles the tobacco."[430] As in other slave-based tobacco-cultivation economies in the Americas, the nature of tobacco cultivation structured the routine of slaves in Pinar del Río so that necessary tasks and the intensity of work followed a seasonal cycle that remained consistent for most of the year. And as in other slave-based tobacco economies, labor

[429] In the comparison of sugar production with other slave-based economies, much of the worker output was achieved under extreme circumstances and conditions, including sustained periods of labor averaging twenty hours a day, that was not replicated in other industries, Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 72.

[430] Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*, 111.

expectations for tobacco slaves in Cuba sharply contrast with the needs and requirements of sugar production. However, for slaves in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century, divergent labor patterns emerged around the process of latifundia. Latifundia distinguished the labor structure of slaves cultivating tobacco in this area, as land and slave holdings were consolidated upon larger vegas with the end result of a large-scale plantation-based economy.

The laboring practices and requirements of tobacco cultivation also affected the life experiences of this unique slave population. In a discussion of the material conditions of slaves living on rural holdings, B.W. Higman addresses the fundamental connection between labor and life resulting from the "interaction between the demographic characteristics of the slaves and the demands made of them by their owners." [431] In other words, Higman discusses the impact of specific labor requirements upon slave populations. In this framework, specific labor regimes structured how, when, and where slaves labored, and they also determined who labored (the demographic makeup of the labor force). Labor regimes determined the composition of workers based upon skill, age, and sex, and so structured the manner in which slaves interacted to form family units. Labor regimes determined slaves' living arrangements (the nature of their housing structures). And finally, labor regimes structured the ways in which tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río exercised mobility and performed acts of resistance.

[431] B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 158.

Chapter 4 Slave Life

"*The greatest severity of toil is endured by the slaves, who in small bands of three or four men, denied even such savage semblance of family life as the great estates afford, are worked upon the small tobacco farms, by owners whose poverty of means, and love of luxury make them utterly inhuman. Under the moonlight as under the sunlight, these hapless wretches, with little rest and no comfort, must plant and tend and gather the pleasant poisonous weed. From that so famous 'tobacco of the Vuelta Abajo,' a cunning alchemist might draw secrets more fatal than its hidden nicotine*."[432]

INTRODUCTION

Given the role that geographic and chronological specificity played in structuring slave-based labor in tobacco cultivation, it is necessary to evaluate the experience of slaves within this unique world. Most importantly for slaves on large-scale vegas, tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century was largely defined by a distinctive demography that contrasted sharply with the young, male population on ingenios. This particular dynamic can be seen in the example of a vega owned by Juana Ramos, a former slave. In 1856, Ramos bequeathed to her heirs a vega of approximately two caballerías located just east of Pinar del Río city. In addition to other articles associated with tobacco cultivation, she also left nine slaves. The slaves included Jose, age 40, and Ramona, age 50, both listed as of the nation "Carabalí," along with another slave, age 30, of the nation "Congo." Additionally, within Juana Ramos' slave population, or dotación, were the following slaves, all listed as "criollo," or born in Cuba:

[432] William Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.* (New York: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 193. For a discussion of William Hurlbert, see Charlotte Cosner, "Ties of Agriculture, Ties of Geography: Cuba's Isleño Farmers in the Early Nineteenth Century," 2000, 9–12.

Tesla, age 25; Toman, age 13; Jose and Pedro, both six years of age, and two other boys, ages five and two. While this dotación's family connections are not readily apparent, (although the ages and nationality of Ramona and Jose suggest the possibility that one or both of them were the parents of the children) it does provide an important example of slave demographics and family formation on this area's tobacco farms.

Specifically, Juana Ramos's dotación is an illustration of the kind of context within which many tobacco slaves were living and working. Half the slaves attached to Juana Ramos' vega were thirteen years old or younger, and four out of the nine were six or younger.[433] In Cuba's nineteenth-century slave economy, a dotación composed of a majority of children was conventional for tobacco slaves, but not sugar-based slaves.[434] This difference is explained by the contrast in work regimes between tobacco and sugar, and the ways that these different work regimes affected slaves' material conditions.

In his study of slavery throughout the British Caribbean, B. W. Higman writes that "variations in the character of slavery and in the demographic experience of slave populations may be traced, in part, to the contrasting physical and economic environments in which slaves were forced to live."[435] This perspective is echoed by Theresa Singleton and Mark Bograd, who emphasize "the economic function of the

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[433] "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de la parda libra Juana Ramos," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 14, exp. 50, 1856.

[434] According to the following authors, working-age slaves constituted the majority of slaves sold over the course of the nineteenth century and therefore this population largely determined the demographic contours of Cuba's slave population in this period. Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 41. In another work, Bergad also contends that for this period, "that as the African population was aging it was not replacing itself through natural reproduction." "Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990), 194.

[435] B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 40.

plantation as the organizing principle for understanding plantation life."[436] William Van Norman shares this structural argument that focuses on the ways that economic regimes determine slaves' material circumstances. In an analysis of how Cuban labor arrangements affected slave subcultures, Van Norman, argues that "local or regional variations" are some of the "least understood aspects" of Cuban slaves' experiences.[437] This chapter's examination of the lives of Cuban tobacco slaves builds upon these scholars' assertions of the importance of crop location and regime, as well as regional specificity, in determining the life experiences of slaves.

As the nature of work dictated the full character of slavery; it is impossible to separate the social component of the slave community from the related labor environment. An analysis of nineteenth-century Cuban slavery must take into account not only how slaves were treated according to work requirements, but also the conditions of their enslavement. The context of labor shaped the entire world of the slave, ranging from the prosaic, daily concerns of housing and mobility to the more essential facets of slave life, including family formation.[438]

Because the type of regime that slaves labored under structured their everyday lives, this chapter draws on that understanding to examine three primary themes of slaves' lives: family formation, housing, and mobility. In these three interrelated areas, there were marked differences between the experiences of tobacco slaves in the Vuelta Abajo and slaves in other labor regimes. The remarkable ability of Vuelta Abajo slaves to

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[436] Theresa A. Singleton and Mark D. Bograd, *The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas* (Glassboro, N.J.: Society for Historical Archaeology, 1995), 16.

[437] William C. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790--1845" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), 93.

[438] While the framework of labor has been widely used to examine slave systems throughout the Atlantic and Caribbean worlds, its use in Cuban slavery is relatively marginal, especially in the context of tobacco-based labor.

establish familial bonds originated in demographic trends inherent to tobacco cultivation that favored a diverse slave population composed of women, children, and those passed prime-working age. This demographic foundation created a relatively balanced male-to-female ratio, which led to creolization, or a high percentage of slave children born on vegas.[439] Additionally, while the independent housing structures on vegas facilitated the cohabitation of slave families, these specific forms also encouraged a relatively high degree of individual autonomy including increased opportunities for mobility. When combined, these factors substantially differentiated the material lives of slaves in this area and under this labor regime from those of other agricultural slave systems in Cuba.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SLAVE LABOR TO SLAVE LIFE IN SUGAR PRODUCTION

As crop specificity plays an outsize role in determining the social world of slaves it is necessary to distinguish the relationship of slave labor to slave life in Cuban tobacco production from that of Cuba's other slave economy, sugar.[440] On a general level, the numbers of slaves laboring on sugar plantations has made this labor life "typical" for Cuban slaves and as a result, the historiography has accepted sugar as the baseline of the Cuban slave experience in the nineteenth century. However, rather than define Cuban slavery, sugar more closely represents one extreme of the Cuban slave-experience spectrum. The extreme nature of sugar is largely predicated on the intense servitude

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[439] Michael Tadman argues that the type of "plantation crop was the essential influence in determining patterns of natural increase and decrease" among slave communities. Michael Tadman, "The Demographic Cost of Sugar: Debates on Slave Societies and Natural Increase in the Americas," *The American Historical Review.* 105, no. 5 (2000): 1536. Tadman is more concerned about how crop specificity differentiated slave population demographics in a comparison of the United States with those of the Caribbean, but it is worth noting that he concludes that sugar without parallel, "persistently and almost inevitably" generated a significant natural decrease in slave populations. Ibid., 1538.

[440] According to Verene Shepherd, "the type of crop slaves cultivated… had a direct bearing on their material circumstances and social life." Verene A. Shepherd, "Slavery Without Sugar in Caribbean Plantation Societies: Examples from Jamaica," in *The Slave Experience in the Caribbean: A Comparative View*, ed. Alberto Vieira, 1996, 209.

required of slaves on these estates and the impact the ingenio had upon the material wellbeing of these slaves. In fact, as ingenios "were like huge grinders which chewed up blacks like cane," this form was exceptional in Cuba as no other slave regime replicated this structure.[441] According Manuel Moreno Fraginals, this aspect of sugar slavery corresponded to unprecedented working hours that over the course of a seven-day work week left sugar slaves just three hours of rest per day, so that "blacks died in shoals" as long as production needs were privileged over the cost in lives.[442] In the same analysis, Moreno Fraginals describes the expansion of sugar as an "exploitation process that was progressively more bestial": increasing production led to "more pressure" through "longer and heavier tasks," which, for the slave, ultimately meant "draining the last second of his useful life."[443]

Moreno Fraginals was not the only historian to describe sugar-based slavery in this manner; Franklin Knight similarly linked "the crucial role of labor in sugar production" to "the wretched conditions of the slaves" on these estates.[444] Knight and other scholars illustrated the extreme nature of sugar slavery by addressing slave health and life expectancy. For Knight, sugar operations translated into an "overall mortality rate of 20 percent" on Cuban ingenios, while Laird Bergad adds that for sugar in the 1860s, a period that Moreno Fraginals describes as one of "super-barbarity," a conservative estimate of the average life expectancy of slaves was only five years.[445] This

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[441] Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba, 1760-1860.* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 143.
[442] Ibid., 148–149.
[443] Ibid., 106.
[444] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 69.
[445] Ibid., 82; Laird W. Bergad, "The Economic Viability of Sugar Production Based on Slave Labor in Cuba, 1859-1878," *Latin American Research Review* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 104; Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill*, 142. For the varying rates of slave mortality according to labor regime, with sugar

severity affected slave children as well; one historian, writing of high slave infant mortality rates, notes "slave mothers were punished regularly and severely to break them of what was called their 'habit' of losing" these children.[446]

This assessment of sugar slave labor and slave life has been consistent throughout historical and contemporary accounts. Contemporary observers noted the extreme physical exertion inherent to the work requirements of sugar and the impact that this exertion had upon slave life expectancy. A rare but famous published account by a former slave described the sugar slave experience as: "With twenty hours of unremitting toil, Twelve in the field, and eight hours to boil, Or grind the cane – believe me few grow old, But life is cheap, and sugar, sir, - is gold."[447] This extreme work cycle was the foundational experience for the majority of slaves that labored on ingenios and was addressed by virtually all foreign travelers. According to John Wurdemann, the "only object of the sugar-planter is money, often regardless if it be attained at the expense of the welfare of his laborers."[448] In this account, sugar slaves were a commodity whose life value was not commensurate with the profit value of sugar production. Richard Madden also highlighted the inhuman treatment of sugar slaves, stemming from the "sole object" of the ingenio owner "to get the utmost amount of labour in a given time out of the

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representing the highest, see Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "'La Sociedad Exclavista y Sus Contradicciones'," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, ed. María del Carmen Barcia, Gloria García, and Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (La Habana, 1994), 271.

446 Robert L Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 60. See also, Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad* (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 13: 202.

447 Juan Francisco Manzano, *The Life and Poems of a Cuban Slave: Juan Francisco Manzano, 1797-1854*, ed. Richard Robert Madden (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1981), 71.

448 John Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 149.

greatest number of slaves" over an unrelenting work cycle.[449] For Henry Ashworth, the working conditions of these slaves and their perceived limited value resulted in a practice he described as "working out" slaves, or giving them extra work requirements, usually at night inside the mill and after long days in the field. As a result of this practice, used slaves – those that have exhausted their physical capacity after years on an ingenio – "become wasted, and they die off."[450] Regarding the "life consuming toil of the ingenio," as described by Richard Dana, many contemporary accounts attempted to quantify this feature of Cuban sugar slavery.[451] This included Robert Baird who argued that "it is generally credited by intelligent parties resident in Cuba, that the average duration of the life of a Cuban slave, after his arrival in the island, does not exceed seven or eight years."[452] Fredrika Bremer placed the average life expectancy among sugar slaves at seven years or less, while Fredrick Townshend and Antonio Gallenga both maintained that the average life of field hands on Cuba's ingenio never exceeded five years.[453]

From its inception, the experiences of slaves on Cuban ingenios were portrayed in the starkest terms possible. This harshness principally originated in the labor structure of sugar plantations with working conditions resulting in substantially reduced life expectancy, an extreme mortality rate, and an extremely low birth rate. The lives of

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[449] Richard Robert Madden, *The Island of Cuba: Its Resources, Progress, and Prospects, Considered in Relation Especially to the Influence of Its Prosperity on the Interests of the British West India Colonies* (London: C. Gilpin; [etc., etc.], 1849), 160–161.
[450] Henry Ashworth, *A Tour in the United States, Cuba, and Canada* (A. W. Bennett, 1861), 59.
[451] Richard Henry Dana, *To Cuba and Back* (Warwick, NY: 1500 Books, 2007), 135.
[452] Robert Baird, *Impressions and Experiences of the West Indies and North America in 1849*, vol. 1 (W. Blackwood and sons, 1850), 181, 227.
[453] Fredrika Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, vol. 2 (Harper & brothers, 1853), 334; Frederick T. Townshend, *Wild Life in Florida, with a Visit to Cuba* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1875), 199; Antonio Carlo Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), 80.

tobacco slaves were also significantly influenced by their labor regime, but fundamental differences in labor structure produced profoundly different outcomes.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SLAVE TO LABOR TO SLAVE LIFE IN TOBACCO PRODUCTION

Before assessing the role of tobacco in producing substantially different material characteristics for its slave population in comparison to sugar, it is worth revisiting William Hurlbert's bleak description of the lives of Cuban tobacco slaves, which introduces this chapter. Hurlbert's assessment of the lives of tobacco slaves is important because it links Cuban tobacco slavery with slavery as it was institutionalized in all other areas of Cuba – namely in the essential context of slavery's barbarity. Tobacco slaves, like all slaves, were subjected to a multitude of degradations inherent to the condition of enslavement.[454]

A few examples of conditions on vegas in Pinar del Río indicate the mistreatment possible under this economic system. In one example, criminal proceedings were initiated against Miguel Serrano, a free black, for the punishment that he gave to his slave, José de Jesús. These events took place in the vegas surrounding the area known as el Macio, near the city of San Juan y Martínez. Serrano's motive could not be determined, despite several attempts at questioning witnesses. However, the punishment was severe enough to generate a medical exam detailing the extent of the beating, which had caused

[454] This assessment of slavery acknowledges slave studies that emphasize slave autonomy but also considers inhume conditions to be the defining characteristic of all slave systems; this perspective borrows heavily from the work of William Dusinberre. Dusinberre writes of the pervasive degradation of enslavement best illustrated by the "charnel houses" of certain rice plantations in the Georgia and South Carolina Sea Islands, where slave infant mortality rates could reach as high as 90%. He offers an important overview of slavery in general in his argument that slaves "were not 'passive victims' of this institution because their responses were anything but passive; but their resistance was – and could not fail to be –only partially successful. Passive they were not, but injured parties they remained." William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), viii.

numerous injuries.[455] As a second example, Don Pedro Dueñas was also the subject of criminal proceedings regarding the treatment of his slave, Lucumí Pedro. In this case, Dueñas's motive was clear as it was outlined by the *síndico*, official protector of slaves, who brought proceedings against Don Dueñas. According to the síndico Pedro had argued with his master over his wish to be either sold to another person or to be given permission to seek another master on his own. The síndico justified Pedro's attempt at seeking removal from the household of Don Dueñas based on the excessive cruelty, *sevicia*, by which Pedro's owner exercised his control.[456] Although these criminal proceedings indicate that there was a limit to the severity with which owners could punish their slaves in Cuba, they also detail the reality of enslavement that transcended work regime and place.

However, just as Hurlbert does not give an accurate accounting of exactly who was enslaved on these estates, the examples of José and Pedro do not represent the full measure of the tobacco slave's life. And although the historian Levi Marrero has noted that we lack "information specific to the treatment that was received by slaves on vegas" even a broad overview reveals pronounced differences between the material conditions of slaves on vegas and those in Cuba's competing crop economies.[457] The differences were largely related to work requirements, so that for slaves involved in tobacco cultivation even in the months of highest activity, the work was less "abusive" than that of the

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[455] Autos criminales seguidos contra Miguel Serrano por el castigo que le dio a su esclavo," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 230, exp. 1385, 1826.

[456] "Expediente sobre criminales contra Don Pedro Dueñas por sevicia de su esclavo Pedro," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 230, exp. 1397, 1851. These limits affected others outside of the master-slave relationship as well—for example, the single 40-year old free black Antonio Valdés was tried for punching a slave named Francisco; Francisco did not belong to Valdés, and Valdés's reasons for assaulting him are unknown. "Expediente sobre los autos criminales seguradas contra el moreno libre Antonio Valdés,"AHPPR, IJC, leg. 231, exp. 1402, 1831.

[457] Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 1972, 13: 203–206.

ingenios.[458] Cuban historian Ramiro Guerra also privileges a labor hierarchy in Cuban slavery, arguing that "in the coffee plantations and in the tobacco fields the life of the slave was not as rugged nor as loaded with burdens as it was in the sugar mills."[459]

On the matter of slave housing and demographic patterns, Laird Bergad says that on vegas, "regimentation was minimal, and without doubt slaves enjoyed better living conditions."[460] According to Bergad, slaves lived "in small bohíos rather than closely guarded barracks," which, when combined with "more equitable" sex ratios, ensured that "family life was a possibility" for slaves laboring on vegas.[461] Contemporary accounts also reflect divergent slave experiences according to labor regime and places. A report published in 1821 on tobacco distinguished vegas from ingenios, cafetales, and the barracón, or holding areas for newly arrived slaves in major cities, on the basis of "the horrible mortality" that characterized these latter three places.[462]

In comparison to those slaves laboring on ingenios and residing outside of the Vuelta Abajo, the structure of tobacco cultivation produced a fundamentally different material world for slaves on Cuban vegas in Pinar del Río, including significant differences in labor requirements, housing arrangements, life expectancy and family formation.[463] Among these differences, the ability of slaves to form families - one of the

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458 Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, vol. 11 (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 63.

459 Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez et al., eds., *A History of the Cuban Nation* (La Habana: Editorial Historia de la Nación Cubana, S.A, 1958), 3: 311. Guerra notes that this was not because overseers were less harsh on vegas than in ingenios, but rather that "the nature of the work to be performed by the slaves was not as pressing nor as tiresome as the tasks necessary to be performed in the collection and processing of sugar cane." Ibid.

460 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 231.

461 Ibid.

462 José Fernández de Madrid, *Memoria sobre el comercio, cultivo y elaboracion del tabaco de esta Isla* (Imprenta Fraternal de los Diaz de Castro, impresores del Consulado nacional, 1821), 14.

463 Tobacco slavery was not a "lesser type of slavery" in contrast to the abject deprivation of sugar slavery. On some ingenios, progressive masters attempted different labor practices than those customarily exercised as an effort to improve the overall conditions of their slaves. However, pointing to changes after the 1820s

most vital components of the human condition - was at the forefront of slave attempts at ameliorating the conditions of their enslavement. For tobacco slaves in the Vuelta Abajo, family formation held particular resonance as distinct demographic patterns endemic to tobacco cultivation made the existence of families a defining feature of life in this community, especially as the nineteenth century progressed.

SLAVE LABOR AND SLAVE DEMOGRAPHY: FAMILY FORMATION

Unlike the slave population in the United States, where relatively balanced sex ratios and high rates of natural reproduction helped substantiate the existence of the slave family, historians attempting to examine this institution in Cuba are forced to account for far different conditions that made slave family formation problematic. In general, Gloria García argues the institution of slavery in Cuba "conspired against [the] formation and stability" of the slave family, while María del Carmen Barcia maintains "the establishment of slave families was extremely precarious."[464] These views are largely accurate as island-wide rural slave populations were comprised of mostly male slaves, which militated against the formation of families. Nowhere was this truer than on Cuba's sugar plantations where in some of the leading sugar production zones, the slave

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that were intended to improve upon the working, living, and demographic conditions of slaves, including sex ratios and birth rates, Gloria García has noted that the results of these efforts were "rather meager." Gloria García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 1. ed. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2003), 12.

[464] Ibid., 29; María del Carmen Barcia, *La Otra Familia: Parientes, Redes Y Descendencia De Los Esclavos En Cuba*, Ensayo Histórico-social (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 2003), 159. The classic statement on slave family formation in Cuba was made by Moreno Fraginals who has gone so far as to argue that in Cuban plantations slave families did not exist, largely on the basis of the unequal sex balance endemic to Cuba's rural slave population. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: Complejo Económico Social Cubano Del Azúcar*, Nuestra Historia (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978), 2: 38–46. And although Gloria García and María del Carmen Barcia also emphasize the problems facing the Cuban slave family an important historiographical distinction must be made between their views and Moreno Fraginals' as the first two authors insist upon the existence of family formation in Cuba's slave community despite the inherent difficulties these slaves faced.

population could be as much as 70 percent male.[465] The specifically weighted sex ratio of Cuba's sugar plantations held significant consequences for the ability of slaves to form families as the work requirements of sugar dictated a predominantly male slave population which actively "discouraged slave family formation" according to historian Robert Paquette.[466] Other scholars have also addressed the lack of female slaves in rural estates and the impact upon slave family formation maintaining that the slave sex imbalance in Cuba was "striking and partially explains the inability of the island's slave population to reproduce naturally."[467] These assessments build upon multiple contemporary accounts addressing the obstacles to slave reproduction and family formation on sugar plantations as a result of unbalanced sex ratios. For example, Abiel Abbot claimed the work on sugar estates is such that some planters are known to "purchase males only," while similarly, Henry Ashworth maintained that "planters do not import females, nor raise families" on sugar plantations.[468]

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[465] Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 67; Levi Marrero argues that the "tendencies" of sugar planters to exclude female slaves along with an ensuing prohibition on marriages "would come to its worst extreme at the mid-point of the nineteenth century." Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 1972, 11:115. Moreover, this inequity within sugar plantation's labor force would continue over the course of the nineteenth century. Laird Bergad, writing about the sugar zone of Matanzas, says that the ratio of male slave to female slaves "hardly changed" from 1841 to 1871. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 193. This argument is further stated in the claim that sugar's labor requirements "never transformed in any fundamental way" over the course of Cuban slavery, and as a result, the slave populations on ingenios remained disproportionately male. Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 28.

[466] Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood*, 59. In addressing sugar's lethal work requirements Paquette further concludes that in Cuba, "slave family life did not fare well" because ingenios so severely limited slave life spans. Ibid., 64.

[467] The following authors base this argument on the powerful role of the labor needs of sugar in determining "the patterns of slaving to the island." Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 27–28; Another historian describes the nineteenth century-century Cuban slave sexual imbalance as "particularly severe." Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies; a Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 25.

[468] Abiel Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, The Black Heritage Library Collection (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 41. Ashworth, *A Tour in the United States, Cuba, and Canada*, 59. James Alexander also remarked on one particular sugar plantation whose proprietor refused to include any female slaves. Sir James Edward Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches, Comprising Visits to the Most*

However, when viewed outside of the sugar plantation the ability of slaves to create family structures must be reinterpreted as certain labor regimes did allow family formation.[469] This includes tobacco slavery in Pinar del Río which exhibited several important characteristics that distinguish it from the more notorious practices elsewhere in Cuba. In a different setting, historian Damian Pargas contends that the "varied nature of regional agriculture…was the most important underlying factor in the development of slave family life – not because it dictated the experiences of slave families…but because it confronted them with a basic framework of *boundaries and opportunities*."[470] This chapter's discussion of family formation for slaves in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century draws on Pargas's observation that regional distinctions framed the "boundaries and opportunities" of domestic development. Principally, tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo presented unique opportunities for slaves as this labor regime supported a higher degree of slave women, children, and elderly men. Based upon a

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Interesting Scenes in North and South America, and the West Indies (R. Bentley, 1833), 375. According to Joseph Gurney, importation of African slaves "consists almost entirely of men, and we were informed that on many of the estates, not a single female is to be found." Gurney goes on to say that in general, "natural increase is disregarded" among large plantations John Gurney, *A Winter in the West Indies: Described in Familiar Letters to Henry Clay, of Kentucky* (J. Murray, 1840), 209. For other accounts of plantations excluding female slaves, see David Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 62; Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 126; Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.*, 153; Baird, *Impressions and Experiences of the West Indies and North America in 1849*, 1:180; Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, 2:334; Alexander Jones, *Cuba in 1851: Containing Authentic Statistics of the Population, Agriculture and Commerce of the Island for a Series of Years, with Official and Other Documents in Relation to the Revolutionary Movements of 1850 and 1851* (Stringer & Townsend, 222 Broadway, Corner of Ann Street, 1851), 22.

[469] For the difficulties of defining the slave family and the problems associated with the limited sources available to study this institution, see Barcia, *La Otra Familia*; B. W Higman, "Methodological Problems in the Study of the Slave Family," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 292, no. 1 (December 16, 2006): 591–596; Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), 86–90.

[470] Damian Pargas, *The Quarters and the Fields: Slave Families in the Non-cotton South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 4. Italics in original.

foundation of slave sex and age diversity this chapter argues that these demographic patterns enhanced opportunities for tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río to form families.[471]

Tobacco's relatively limited labor requirements were conducive to a wide range of laborer – a basis from which slaves in this community were able to construct familial associations. The nineteenth century writer Robert Russell, in his discussion of the merits of tobacco cultivation by slave labor, noted that "young and old slaves can find suitable employment in the culture and preparation of the crop."[472] Russell also observed that women and children were not only adept at picking off worms and gathering tobacco leaves, they could also do so for a much reduced purchase cost based upon their age and sex.[473] Reflecting tobacco's innate labor requirements individual, tobacco-based dotaciones in Cuba also reveal the presence of a diversified slave population. The example of the vega *Santa Isabel,* previously discussed in the last chapter, illustrates many of the population dynamics that distinguish this form of agrarian slavery. This vega's labor force included 70 male slaves and 21 female slaves. In addition, there were 19 children, including 16 boys and three girls.[474] This plantation was notable for the size of its labor force, but the demographic makeup of its slave community—more than one-third women and children—was not exceptional.

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[471] In her important analysis of Cuban slave families Maria del Carmen Barcia notes that most slave unions were "matrifocal" and the role of women in these formations is a central element in the following discussion of slave families in Pinar del Río. However, in defining slave family, I am referring to both traditional nuclear family arrangements where women certainly occupy a central role, as well as non-traditional unions where extended kinship and communal ties between individuals of various ages and sexes also constitute the slave family. Barcia, *La Otra Familia*, 53.

[472] Robert Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.* (Edinburgh,, 1857), 142.

[473] Ibid.

[474] Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...* (Madrid: Colegio national de Sordo-Mudos, 1851), 90.

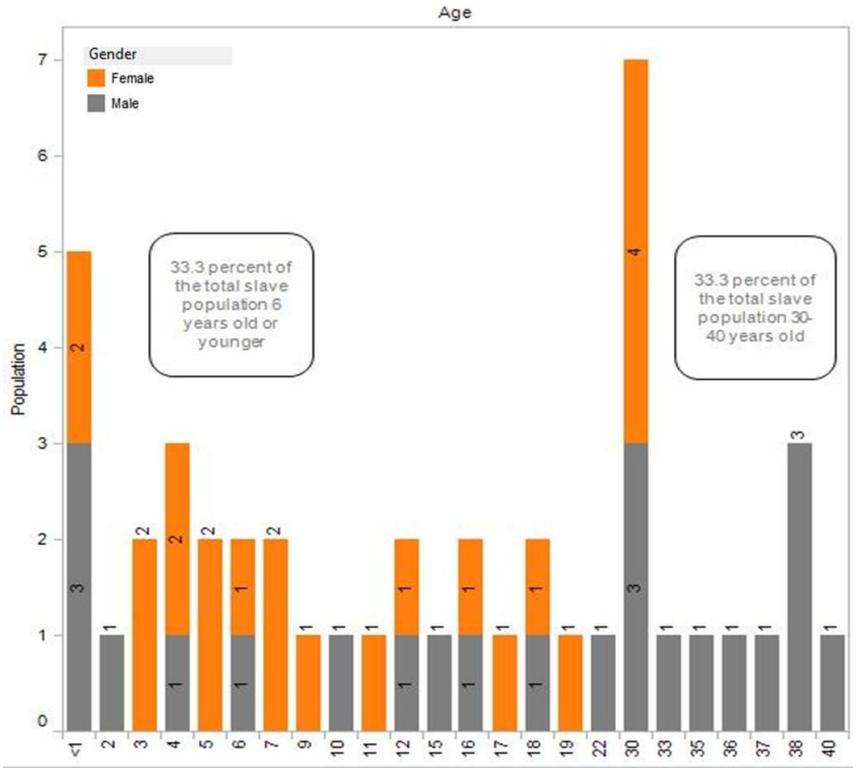

Figure 1: Individual Vega Dotación Makeup.[475]

The influence of tobacco cultivation in the Vuelta Abajo on slave demographics can also be seen in the slave population of Don Andrés José Hernandez's vega. In this unusual estate located in the province of Pinar del Río, Don Hernandez primarily cultivated tobacco - his listed infrastructure included a drying shed for finishing and storing tobacco, or *casa de tabaco*. Don Hernandez also grew *platanos*, bananas or plantains, other fruits, and coffee, devoted some of his land to livestock grazing, and rented one caballería of land to neighboring laborers. This was a diverse plantation economy located within a single property, but it is the primary cultivation of tobacco that helps explain the demographic breakdown of his dotación. In this estate, consisting of 43

[475] "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de Don Andrés José Hernandez," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 109, exp. 513, 1853.

slaves with an additional two men listed as "Chino" alongside these slaves, the distribution shows almost a complete sex balance with 23 males and 22 females. In terms of age range, the majority of slaves on this vega were outside of prime age range: 51 percent were 15 or younger, while 33 percent of the dotación was six or younger. This last group included an infant named Maria (nine months) as well as another infant, unnamed but listed as 40 days old.

Another veguero in Pinar del Río, Don Manuel Diaz, had thirty slaves in 1827, seventeen of whom (56 percent) were male. This dotación, too, was remarkably balanced between male and female slaves. Don Diaz's dotación was also similar to Don Hernandez's in its age breakdown of this slave community: seven of the seventeen male slaves were under the age of ten. In terms of male slaves, these seven children represent 41 percent of Don Diaz's dotación, with all but one of these listed as "*criollo*" or having been born in Cuba.[476] In these two tobacco-based slave populations Don Hernandez's and Don Diaz's dotaciones were both characterized by balanced sex ratios and a high percentage of young slaves, with many born in Cuba. Although these records preclude specific family affiliations, the demographic properties of these slaves suggest a foundation from which slaves could and most likely did find potential partners and form generational connections within these slave communities.

Tobacco's unique ability to support slave family formation can also be seen on a smaller scale. In 1841, the owner of a vega in Pinar del Río, Maria de la Trinidad, listed among her slaves two African adults, a man and a woman. Additionally, she registered three children, Juan de la Cruz, Jose Pilan, and Manuela, all listed as criollos. While

476 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don Manuel Diaz," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 123, exp. 524, 1827. Note, the ages for female slaves in this dotación are only partially accounted for and therefore not used.

Maria did not specify the children's ages or relationship with the two adult slaves, their place of birth, Cuba, and ages suggest that this group at the very least mirrored a family structure.[477] In 1878, several other estates in Pinar del Río had similar dotaciones marked by balanced sex ratios and skewed age ratios favoring children. For example, Don Domingo had six slaves, half of whom were female and another half listed as under the age of 13. Another slave owner, Don Antonio, owned nine slaves, four of whom were female and three of whom were under the age of 15. Finally, Doña Isabel owned seven female slaves out of a total dotación of 12, with one-third of the 12 under 14 years of age.[478] Although slave family formation in rural Cuban estates was tenuous where it did occur were on estates that had a demographically conducive environment including large percentages of female and young slaves.[479]

SLAVE DEMOGRAPHICS: SEX

As primary indicators of familial linkages, the sex and age ratios within Cuba's tobacco slave community can be further examined in an effort to extend the limited understanding of where and how Cuban slaves were able to form families. In terms of slave sex ratios within individual economies, tobacco cultivation particularly encouraged a high degree of female slaves as they were able to meet the labor requirements and they were less expensive than male slaves. In the United States tobacco planters did not distinguish between the productivity capacity of male and female slaves, and to a large

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477 "Expediente sobre autos testamentarios de la Morena Libre Maria de la Trinidad," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 135, exp. 660, 1838-1841.

478 "Expediente. sobre padrón de esclavos que contiene los nombres de los dueños, de los esclavos, asi como, edad, sexo, nacionalidad, del ano 1878 […]," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1484, 1878

479 Although B.W. Higman argues for the precarious nature of family formation under slavery, he maintains that where it occurred was directly linked to a young or creole generation, which in turn was related to the fertility of women, a characteristic that was largely influenced by particular work regime. *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 364–373.

degree, "every able-bodied slave woman and most slave girls aged twelve or more did regular field work," according the historian Lorena Walsh.[480] Similarly, male and female slaves labored together on tobacco farms in the Vuelta Abajo from the outset of tobacco production in Cuba. A particularly enlightening example is found in a proposal in 1783 by the Factoría, representing the royal tobacco monopoly, for the sale of 185 slaves of different ages and sexes to be sold at 350 pesos without distinction among men, women, and children.[481] The labor structure of tobacco cultivation definitely facilitated the use of female slaves, and the Factoría's proposal represents an early precedent for the use of these slaves on vegas in Cuba.

The practicality of using female slaves for labor on Cuban tobacco plantations is further borne out by a large-scale analysis of sex ratios within this economy and region. In 1817, as the monopoly on tobacco ended, the ratio of female to male slaves in Pinar del Río was one to 2.4.[482] While this proportion favored male slaves, the remarkable presence of even this limited proportion of female slaves is best understood in contrast to other slave regimes in Cuba during the same year. In his comparison of estates in Pinar

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480 Lorena S. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville, VA, 1993), 177. For American corollaries concerning the use of female slaves in tobacco cultivation, see Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800*, ed. Institute of Early American History and Culture (Williamsburg, Va) (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 399–401; T. H Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution*, 2nd pbk. ed (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001), 51.

481 José Rivero Muñiz, *Tabaco, Su Historia En Cuba* (La Habana: Instituto de Historia, Comisión Nacional de la Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba, 1964), 2:36.

482 Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 137–138. Emeterio Santovenia addresses the same period and the same area as Humboldt and although his calculations are different - Santovenia lists the female slave population of Pinar del Río in 1819 as more than 40 percent - they nevertheless affirm the considerable concentration of female slaves in Pinar del Río and the tobacco economy. Santovenia, Emeterio, *Pinar Del Río*, 1. ed. (México: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1946), 76.

del Río, Alexander von Humboldt wrote that Batabanó, a central coffee-growing region, had a female-to-male slave ratio of one to eight - a nearly 400 percent difference from the slave population in Pinar del Río. The difference is even more pronounced for the sugar-based San Juan de los Remedios, where for every female slave, there were 19 male slaves, making female slaves just five percent of the total slave population in this sugar region.[483] If Cuba's slave system is defined by the exclusion of "female slaves from the sugar estates" then the inclusion of women in tobacco cultivation marks it as a distinct labor regime within that system.[484]

The remarkable nature of this region's concentration of female slaves would continue over the course of Cuban slavery. After the turn of the century Jacobo Pezuela, in his detailed analysis of Pinar del Río's tobacco slave population lists male and female tobacco slaves by partido, or provincial subdivision. According to his figures the overall provincial female slave population was over 30 percent. However, there were, according to Pezuela, at least eight jurisdictions that either matched or exceed the 30 percent threshold. In one of the most important tobacco areas, San Cristóbal, 39 percent of the slave population was female, and in Bahia Honda another tobacco growing area, women represented 48 percent of the slave population.[485] Nearly a decade later, according to the

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[483] Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 137–138. In fact, Humboldt goes out of his way to distinguish the exceptional disparity in sex ratios within the ingenio. Ibid., n. 1, 203.

[484] Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies; a Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, 26. Hall, adds that within Cuban slavery, "during the nineteenth century very few women were present." Ibid. For a similar assessment on the lack of female slaves on Cuban ingenios, see Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 193.

[485] For Pinar del Río numbers, see Province Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1866), 207; for San Cristóbal, ibid., 4:425; for Bahia Honda, Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863), 89. Other partidos include Baja, (37.2 percent), ibid., 1:105; Candaleria, (37.5 percent), ibid., 1:270; Consolación del Sur, (33 percent), Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geografico, estadistico, historico de la Isla de Cuba*, vol. 2 (Imprenta del Establecimiento de Méllado, a cargo de don Joaquin Bernat, 1863), 138; Guane, (37

1877 census, the province of Pinar del Río maintained a slave population that was 40 percent female, mirroring the one to 2.4 female-to-male ratio listed by Humboldt in the first quarter of the century.[486] This data from 1817 and 1877 demonstrates both the exceptionality and consistency in the use of female slaves for tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río over the course of the nineteenth century.

This remarkable nature of female slavery in Pinar del Río had profound effects, especially on family formation. In addressing the role of the female slave in Cuban agricultural economies, the Cuban tobacco writer Alvaro Reynoso, writing in 1860, recommended to slave owners that "the preferred care …should be to proportion the number of servants of distinct sexes so that they are able to constitute families."[487] For Reynoso, the link between slave families and female slaves was unequivocal. Moreover, Reynoso emphasized the importance of female slaves and used their presence to distinguish labor regimes in Cuba. Addressing tobacco, Reynoso affirmed "without fear of equivocating, that there exist slave women as strong as the most vigorous males" and that "it is evident that they are not useless, as they are intended for jobs that are easy to carry out and which are necessary to be performed" and to which they would "anyway be applied other individuals."[488] In reference to sugar, Reynoso argued that a "supposed inconvenience" exists in regard to female slaves; he said that sugar planters regard

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percent), ibid., 2:488; Los Palacios, (40.7 percent) Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 4:173; San Juan y Martínez, (33 percent), ibid., 4:476.

[486] Fe Iglesias García, "El Censo Cubano de 1877 y Sus Diferentes Versiones," *Santiago* 34 (June 1979): 198.

[487] Alvaro Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...* (Habana: impr. del Tiempo, 1861), 324.

[488] Ibid., 324–325.

women as "more weak than men; they are not able to be applied to all classes of work during certain periods of their life, or perform any sort of work."[489]

Reynoso offered additional reasons for the inclusion of women slaves, including his belief that "in the dotaciones in which one does not encounter balanced sex ratios there are frequently fights between the slaves" with the result that slaves either "leave the farm temporarily or leak out completely."[490] By contrast, Reynoso argued that the slave "that lives as a family almost never escapes, because he has a companion that cares for his clothes, prepares the most desirable food."[491] Moreover, Reynoso contended that the slave who has familial attachments "in order to assure the happiness of those he loves, works with more ardor in his *conuco*" or provision grounds.[492] For Reynoso, female

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[489] Ibid., 324. Reynoso contended that the reticence for using female slaves was related to the condition of pregnancy that devalued these slaves, especially in light of the Cuban planters' traditional preference for replacing slaves through the slave trade, rather than natural reproduction. Another concern regarding female labor and reproduction is addressed by the nineteenth century doctor, Bernard de Chateausalins who mentions a high rate of miscarriages among sugar slaves, due to extreme physical and daily labor in the cane fields even during their ninth month of pregnancy. As cited in, Esteban Montejo, *Biografía de Un Cimarrón*, trans. Miguel Barnet (La Habana: Instituto de Ethnología y Folklore, 1966), 40, n. 5. On the subject of diminished work capacity and diminished reproduction based upon unbalanced sex ratios and strenuous pregnancies brought about by field labor, see Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 1972, 11:13: 202; Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill*, 142–143; Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 76.

[490] Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...*, 325. In contrast, many contemporary observers remarked on how the sex imbalance within sugar production severely affected the overall material circumstances for many slaves. According to the former slave Esteban Montejo life on an ingenio could be "solitary in all manners" precisely because "women were quite scarce". Montejo, *Biografía de Un Cimarrón*, 40. Julia Howe equated the lack of women on sugar plantations with extreme deprivation, saying of these estates, "whereon there are no women, where the wretched laborers have not the privileges of beasts…not even the semblance of family ties and domestic surroundings alleviates the sore strain upon life and limb." Julia Ward Howe, *A Trip to Cuba* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860), 220–221. This inequity that plagued Cuba's slave community provided the basis for Alexander Von Humboldt's recommendation that in "every sugar plantation, the ratio between the small number of female blacks to male blacks should be regulated" to achieve a ratio of at least one-third female slaves. Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 258, 137.

[491] Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...*, 325.

[492] Ibid., 324. Although this is outside the scope of this dissertation, a significant component of family formation driven by the inclusion of female slaves in higher ratios is the opportunity for marriage. This

slaves had a tangible impact on plantations: balanced sex ratios not only encouraged natural reproduction and partnerships among these slaves but also served to ameliorate the suffering of male slaves.

SLAVE DEMOGRAPHICS: AGE

Sex ratios were not the only factor that affected the lives of Cuban slaves. Age diversity, especially in the form of children, also affected the slave community and its ability to organize family units. However, the institution of slavery in Cuba during the nineteenth century was structured in a manner that effectively prevented demographic diversity among its slaves. This is largely a result of two interrelated and defining features: a slave trade that selected for male slaves and a plantation economy that maintained its labor force through replacement rather than natural reproduction. The result was a lack of female and child slaves, a condition with "demographically lethal" ramifications according to Michal Tadman.[493]

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institution for slaves was engrained in Cuban regulations dating to at least 1789, and its importance is addressed by Manuel Barcia, who argues along with the right to self-purchase and the opportunity to change masters, marriage was one of the "three most significant privileges conceded to Cuban slaves." Manuel Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 93. However it can be argued that the practical application of marriage among slaves was limited, especially on certain plantations, as they were a "relatively limited phenomenon on the plantations." Barcia, *La Otra Familia*, 80. Levi Marrero adds that in contrast to the United States, where planters promoted marriage among their slaves as a means to encourage natural increase as well as impart some degree of humanity, planters in Cuba, "since the inception of the plantation regime rejected such an approach as it would reveal the resignation to acquire slaves in a reasonable proportion" based upon sex distribution. Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, 1972, 11:202. The lack of formal marriage among slaves is attested to in official records where the number of slaves listed as married was negligible at best: in 1869, less than four percent of slaves were classified as married. Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873: Colección de Informes, Memorias, Proyectos y Antecedentes Sobre El Gobierno de La Isla de Cuba, Relativos Al Citado Periodo, Que Ha Reunido Por Comisión Del Gobierno D. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat*, ed. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat (Impr. Nacional, 1873), 152–153.

[493] Tadman, "The Demographic Cost of Sugar: Debates on Slave Societies and Natural Increase in the Americas," 1543.

Numerous nineteenth-century Cuban observers spoke to these related conditions, including Alvaro Reynoso, who argued that most Cuban planters believe that is "bad business to buy either women or young slaves as it would be better to acquire strong males that yield immediately much more work."[494] Other writers testified to the impact of these patterns on natural reproduction among slaves. This included Maturin Ballou who noted that "the proportion of female slaves on the plantations has always been so small…that not nearly so many children are born as would be supposed." Ballou would add that "it has always been clearly understood that the births" among Cuban slaves "have not nearly kept pace with the number of deaths among them."[495] Regarding these defining features of Cuban slavery, Robert Baird also contended that anyone "who knows Cuba, and the brutal manner in which the great mass of the agricultural slaves are treated there, will laugh at the idea of the slave population of Cuba being self-supporting."[496] For Baird, it was "quite notorious that the slave population of Cuba is almost entirely supported by importation of slaves from the coast of Africa"; so that the Cuban planter, according to Baird, "finds it cheaper to steal slaves or to buy them" than to support natural reproduction.[497]

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[494] Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...*, 324.
[495] Maturin Murray Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and co, 1885), 279; José de Ahumada y Centurión, *Memoria historico politica de la isla de Cuba: redactada de orden del señor ministro de ultramar*, Havana (A. Pego, 1874), 41–42.
[496] Baird, *Impressions and Experiences of the West Indies and North America in 1849*, 1:180.
[497] Ibid., 1:201. Other writers claimed that natural reproduction among slaves is "small" and only occurs on the best-run plantations or that in general "natural increase is disregarded" for Cuban slavery. Howe, *A Trip to Cuba*, 209. For additional descriptions regarding the paucity of slave children on Cuban plantations, see Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.*, 192; Jones, *Cuba in 1851*, 22; Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 62; Richard Burleigh Kimball, *Cuba, and the Cubans: Comprising a History of the Island of Cuba, Its Present Social, Political, and Domestic Condition: Also, Its Relation to England and the United States,* (S. Hueston, 1850), 230; Gurney, *A Winter in the West Indies*, 209.

The interrelated forces of the Cuban slave trade and the island's labor needs generating these severely unbalanced sex ratios and the consequential lack of natural reproduction reached their apotheosis in sugar production. In her analysis of multiple sugar plantations in 1875, Rebecca Scott describes ingenio conditions in relation to age structuring for slaves on these plantations as "quite striking": as only six percent of all slaves were enumerated in the oldest category, between the ages of 51 and 60, while less than eight percent of the population was between six and ten years old.[498] This put "fully 63 percent" of ingenio populations within the prime age, leaving Scott to conclude that because these ingenios "were not carrying a terrible burden of young and old slaves," the owners were not forced to sustain "the full cost of reproduction of their work force."[499] Scott's argument corresponds to Gloria García's statement that over the course of the nineteenth century, even when planters attempted to addresses unbalanced gender ratios and slave treatment, "results were marginal at best."[500]

One of the starkest appraisals of Cuban slavery concerns infant mortality on sugar plantations. According to Moreno Fraginals, the child death rate from 1835 to 1841 for select sugar plantations was 57.5 percent, a number that was significantly reduced, but still measured at 28.3 percent in the period 1856 to 1860.[501] Moreno Fraginals explains

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[498] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, New pbk. ed. (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 93.
[499] Ibid., 93–94.
[500] García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 12.
[501] Manuel Moreno Fraginals, "Africa in Cuba: A Quantitative Analysis of the African Population in the Island of Cuba," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 292, no. 1 (June 1977): 196, table 8. The Cuban historian Le Riverend, in citing sugar's high mortality rates, argues that this was an acceptable number for the sugar owners since "the cost was more than recovered" as profits continued to rise over the course of the nineteenth century." Julio Le Riverend, *Economic History of Cuba* (Ensayo Book Institute, 1967), 156. Moreno Fraginals's own calculation of the gross death rate of select plantations ranged from 61 to 63% over the nineteenth century – rates that Moreno Fraginals describes as "catastrophic." Moreno Fraginals, "Africa in Cuba," 196.

sugar's high child mortality rate as due to the laboring conditions of sugar production, a view shared by Hugh Thomas who notes that the work requirements of sugar "prevented breeding even where there was anything approaching a balance of numbers."[502] The exceptionality of Cuban sugar planters in practicing replacement over natural reproduction is intimately related to the economics of the plantation. In the nineteenth century, Arrango argued that economic returns obviated any potential benefits associated with natural reproduction, as the care of a newborn slave was not only prolonged, but also often futile.[503] According to another nineteenth-century writer, planters preferred importation to natural reproduction because in importation, "there is no difficulty," as slaves were easily replaced directly from Africa.[504]

At the most basic level of slavery, all individuals were viewed as laborers to be used for the personal gain of their master, and this was no different for child slaves. The only question for slave owners was at what age these physically immature slaves could be forced into labor. The answer to this question depended entirely upon the dictates of the work regime that the crop required.[505] As a result, there were significant differences

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[502] Moreno Fraginals, "Africa in Cuba," 196, table 8; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom*, Updated ed., 1st Da Capo Press ed (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 171.

[503] As cited in, Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies; a Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, 24. A different view argues that Cuban officials contrived extensive measures to encourage natural reproduction among slaves. Fe Iglesias García, "Algunas Consideraciones En Torno a La Abolicíon de La Esclavitude," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba* (Editorial Academia, 1986), 76.

[504] William Bryant, *Letters of a Traveller, or, Notes of Things Seen in Europe and America* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1850), 395. Another contemporary author claimed that slave drivers continue to insist that it was more financially conducive to work slaves to death and replace them as needed rather than lessen work requirements and improve conditions. Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles*, 173. For descriptions of sugar plantations characterized by either low levels or even non-existent occurrences of live births, see Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 288; Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 165–166; Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.*, 153.

[505] Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 189. I do not discount the influence that individual masters, regardless of crop economy, had upon the decision of the age at which a slave could be employed in the primary production of the estate's cash crop. But I argue that labor demands commonly overrode any personal differences among planters in this regard.

among various slave systems in the frequency with which children constituted part of the overall dotación. In Cuba, the difference was most pronounced in the contrast between tobacco and sugar. Unlike sugar, the economics of tobacco and its labor requirements made child labor suitable, and this encouraged a far greater reliance upon young slaves for tobacco cultivation than was the case for sugar.

A variety of nineteenth-century Cuban accounts regarding the cultivation of tobacco confirm the widespread use of child labor in this economy. In a report written by the Sociedad Económica, the author insisted that "the cultivation of tobacco is fully a cultivation for kids."[506] Another report in the same period also argued that because of how tobacco was cultivated, vegueros saw in each of their new children a new laborer. Furthermore, the "diverse operations" on a vega meant that children were able to serve as adult laborers, and even that "at times they are more suitable." The same author contended that this was especially true in the sowing of tobacco plants because children's small feet and hands did not disturb the seedlings. The author went on to specify that children were particularly adept at the stripping of tobacco leaves, *despalillar*, as their hands were both "agile and delicate."[507] Additionally, in 1830, the agricultural writer Joseph Hernandez claimed that in Cuban tobacco cultivation, the ideal workers for worming the tobacco leaves were "either boys or girls" from ages "ten to fourteen." a description that clearly links tobacco production to child labor in Cuba.[508]

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[506] Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 6–7, 4, 1861, 229.

[507] Madrid, *Memoria sobre el comercio, cultivo y elaboracion del tabaco de esta Isla*, 1: 12, 16; 2: 15.

[508] Joseph M. Hernandez, "On the Cultivation of the Cuba Tobacco," in *The Southern Agriculturist*, vol. III, 1830, 463. This argument for the use of children was repeated in 1846, as another author, speaking to the application for the first time in America of Cuban tobacco in a Florida county, notes that this "is a production peculiarly adapted" to a variety of distinct individuals, including children, which "are almost as good hands as grown men." J. D. Legare, ed., *The Southern Agriculturist*, vol. 6, 1 (A. E. Miller, 1846), 71. For the use of child labor in American tobacco, see Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco

The view of children as ideal laborers for cultivating tobacco is borne out by slave holding patterns both on individual and provincial levels. For the former, the nineteenth-century Russian traveler Alexander Lakier, upon surveying a Cuban vega in the 1850s, described the deplorable conditions the slaves on this particular plantation were forced to endure. Lakier particularly commented on the slaves' children, as he described them as naked and filthy, yet his most pointed observation was that among these children were numerous slaves less than a year old.[509] The large number of slave children marked this vega as distinct, at least in comparison with other slave-based labor in Cuba's agricultural economies. However, this particular vega was not singular in its use of child slaves. Another individual example also illustrates the prevalence of young slaves in tobacco cultivation as the vega of Don José María de la Cruz, a tobacco farmer in Pinar del Río also depended heavily upon young slaves as his dotación included four slaves with the listed ages of four, six, eight and 30.[510] The relatively reduced labor expectations of tobacco cultivation permitting the use of children for slave labor also corresponded to the use of elderly slaves in the same work. On a very basic level, the dotación of the veguero Don José María Miranda exemplifies the extreme age range possible on a vega as his two slaves included one young slave, age 14 or 15, and one slave "*enfermo*" and "*quebrado*," old and broken, age 50 or 55.[511]

Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," 177–178; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 198; Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, 48; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 373, 402.

509 As quoted in, Ángel García and Piotr Mironchuk, "La Esclavitude En Cuba Vista Por Los Viajeros Rusos," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba*, Instituto de Ciencias Históricas (Academia de Ciencias de Cuba) (Editorial Academia, 1986), 157.

510 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don José María de la Cruz," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 131, exp. 617, 1846-1857.

511 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don José María Miranda para la formación de inventario de sus bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 131, exp. 618, 1846.

On a larger scale, several Cuban contemporary historians have also noted the prevalence of slaves outside of prime age range on tobacco farms, including Ramón de la Sagra, José García de Arboleya, and Jacobo de la Pezeula. Writing in the 1830s, Sagra suggested that there were 7,927 slaves devoted to tobacco cultivation in Cuba.[512] However, in a separate note, Sagra indicated that this number only represented those actively employed in cultivating the crop as Sagra described another two-thirds of slaves, approximately 16,000, as young and old slaves who were attached to tobacco estates but presumably not engaged in the primary harvesting requirements.[513] This meant that 66 percent of tobacco slaves fell outside the prime age range, a percentage of young and old slaves that more than doubled that of sugar, according to Sagra. Two decades later, Arboleya offered similar calculations regarding tobacco's prevailing use of slaves outside the prime age range. In 1852, Arboleya analyzed the slave populations of Cuba's three leading agrarian economies: sugar, coffee, and tobacco. He estimated that tobacco employed 40,000 slaves, 75 percent of whom were young and old, leaving just 10,000 slaves as prime hands.[514] In comparison, Arboleya determined 28 percent of coffee slaves were young or old, and 25 percent of sugar slaves were young or old.[515] According to

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[512] Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia Economico-Politica Y Estadistica De La Isla De Cuba; Ó Sea De Sus Progresos En La Poblacion, La Agricultura, El Comercio Y Las Rentas* (Habana: Impr. de las viudas de Arazoza y Soler, 1831), 120.

[513] As it is untenable to have two-thirds of slaves not working in the primary economy of the plantation, it is most likely that Sagra was only distinguishing between prime age slaves and slaves outside of this range. Ibid., 123, n. 2.

[514] José García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración* (Habana: Impr. del Gobierno y Captianía General, 1852), 144. The innate characteristics of cultivation dictating the use of this demographic dynamic is underscored by similar patterns in the aftermath of slavery; in Pinar del Río, a sizable ratio of tobacco laborers continued to be women and children. As measured in 1894, this composition nearly matched the proportions during slavery: Pinar del Río counted 26,000 men and 10,000 women and children cultivating tobacco. Charles M Pepper, *To-Morrow in Cuba* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 205.

[515] García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 140–142.

Arboleya's account, one of the most conspicuous differences between sugar and tobacco slavery was the inverse relationship each economy had with the other regarding young and old slave demography.

Jacobo de la Pezuela's work offers a similar perspective that continues to maintain the distinction of tobacco cultivation in Cuba. Examining subdivisions in Pinar del Río, Pezuela assessed the different partidos' distributions of young and old slaves, including two partidos in Pinar del Río, Bahia Honda and Los Palacios. Both of these partidos include a high proportion of slaves on either end of the age spectrum: 33 percent of Bahia Honda slaves and 42 percent of Los Palacios slaves were outside of prime age (13-60).[516] Notably, these proportions are significantly greater than those for the island's totals during this period. For comparison, in 1855, the island's percentage of rural slaves outside of prime age range (12 to 60) was 25 for males and 29 for females. In 1856, 25 percent of males and 32 percent of females were outside of prime age range. And in 1857, 25 percent of males and 34 of females were outside of prime age range.[517]

As demonstrated by contemporary Cuban scholars the age demographics of Pinar del Río's slave population proved to be distinctive. This characteristic of tobacco cultivation would remain consistent over the course of the nineteenth century and these patterns can be further traced using census records from 1827, 1846 and 1862. In 1827, male slaves under 15 and female slaves under 12 together made up more than one-fifth of Pinar del Río's slave population; this was one of the highest percentages of all jurisdictions in the western half of the island and higher than that of the sugar area of

[516] Pezuela, *Diccionario geografico, estadistico, historico de la Isla de Cuba*, 1:89; Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, 1866, 4:174.
[517] As cited in Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, 79.

Matanzas.[518] In 1846, Pinar del Río's percentage of slaves younger than 15 had risen to 25 percent, which again was higher than the comparable percentage in Matanzas.[519]

The 1862 census permits a more detailed analysis of the two central areas of the Vuelta Abajo, Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal. Of all western jurisdictions San Cristóbal, in this year, held the largest percentage (19) of slaves younger than 10, while Pinar del Río held the second highest percentage (17). In Matanzas, by contrast, only 11 percent of slaves were younger than 10. In both Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, 38 percent of slaves were under 15 years of age, in contrast to Matanzas, where only 23 percent of slaves were under the age of 15. On the other end of the age spectrum, in both Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, more than four percent of slaves were older than 61. In total, more than 40 percent of slaves in the Vuelta Abajo were outside of the prime age range.[520] The differences between slave demography in Pinar del Río and elsewhere in Cuba can be explained by the way that the general conditions of Cuban slavery and the slave trade structured specific sex and age ratios as well as the disparate labor requirements among competing slave economies. These demographic differences were important to slave communities as the presence of diverse age populations - in contrast to singular

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[518] Slaves in this census were only differentiated by these two age categories. Cuba, *Cuadro Estadístico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba Correspondiente Al Año de 1827...: Precedido de Una Descripción Histórica, Física, Geográfica y Acompañada de Cuantas Notas Son Conducentes Para La Ilustración Del Cuadro* (Imp. de Arazoza y Soler, 1829).

[519] Cuba., *Cuadro Estadistico de La Siempre Fiel Isla de Cuba, Correspondiente Al Año de 1846,* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno y capitania general, 1847), 86.

[520] José Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas de La Isla de Cuba, En 1862.* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno, 1864), 27–29. For a critique of the 1862 census in terms of underestimating the total number of children aged one to ten, see Fraginals M. Moreno, Herbert S Klein, and Stanley L Engerman, "The Level and Structure of Slave Prices on Cuban Plantations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Some Comparative Perspectives," *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 5 (1983): 1203, n. 7. These authors make a relevant point that listed age is relative and subjective and should not be considered an accurate indicator of chronological age since birth. In many cases, a slave's age was listed and manufactured according to political needs (reducing ages in the wake of gradual emancipation laws) or economic needs (to secure loans on capital). Otherwise, age was often estimated in relation to the labor the slave had been employed in and the labor the slave was still capable of doing. Ibid., 1207, n. 17.

communities predominately comprised of prime age slaves - substantially increased the base from which slaves were able to draw familial connections.

In addition to its significance for family formation, the age range of tobacco slaves also represented a pathway to freedom. The Moret Law, created on July 4, 1870, was Spain's attempt to simultaneously emancipate Cuba's slaves and placate Cuban planters.[521] Designed to facilitate gradual emancipation this law was limited to the freeing of slaves born since September 1868 and slaves 60 years of age or older.[522] However, the importance of the Moret Law in granting freedom to slaves cannot be overstated as it freed 32,000 slaves, in addition to 61,766 children born between 1870 and 1877.[523]

While the Moret Law represented the first substantial step towards abolishing slavery in Cuba, the ability of slaves to take advantage of this regulation was often limited by the degree to which they could negotiate Cuba's legal system. The inchoate nature of the Moret Law can be seen in the case of Candelaria, Maria, and Eulogio, slaves of Don Agustin de León y Rodriguez. Following the death of their master, these slaves sought the assistance of Pinar del Río's local *síndico*, Servero Vicho, in an effort to be declared free under the Moret Law. Vicho heard testimony regarding the status of these three slaves—specifically, whether they were to be considered *libertos*, or freed slaves, according to the Moret Law. In reading the will of the deceased Don, the *síndico*, at least

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[521] The Moret Law reflected Spain's uneasy position between increasing international abolitionism and the desire to maintain peaceful and profitable relations with Cuba's plantation economy. The American Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, and the United States Minister to Spain, Dan Sickles maintained that the law was "a project for relieving the slave owners from the necessity of supporting infants and aged slaves." United States, *Correspondence of the Department of State in Relation to the Emancipation of Slaves in Cuba, and Accompanying Papers: Transmitted to the Senate in Obedience to a Resolution* (Government printing office, 1870), 13.

[522] The Moret Law also freed *emancipados*, those captured on slave ships as part of the now illegal slave trade to Cuba and those freed for service in Spain's army. These two categories are not addressed here, due to the fact that their numbers were negligible and independent of slave economies on the island.

[523] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 71.

initially, was unsure whether Candelaria and Maria qualified for *liberto* status due to their advanced age or whether Eulogio qualified due to his youth. The *síndico* argued that their claim could only be resolved by referring to the slaves' baptismal records, which were not available. As the baptismal records of these slaves were not included in this intial petition Candelaria, Maria, and Eulogio remained as slaves until further evidence testifying to their ages could be submitted. Because the status of these slaves, as well as that of numerous others that sought freedom under the Moret Law, was subject to official records that may or may not have existed or that slaves may or may not have had access to, the extent of the Moret Law had limitations.[524]

Still, the Moret Law had an important impact, especially in Pinar del Río where the demographics of the slave population in this area overlapped with the age stipulations of this emancipation decree. It is possible to calculate the number and percentages of slaves who attained freedom through the Moret Law using a list compiled by the Junta Central Protectora de Libertos, the governing body overseeing implementation of the Moret Law, along with census data from 1869, 1871, and 1877.[525] Together, these data

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[524] "Testamentaria de Don Agustin de León y Rodriguez formados para tratar de la libertad de los esclavos," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 616, exp. 3666, 1878. Note, the full range of slaves in Pinar del Río impacted by the Moret Law can also be seen on a micro level as in the tax record concerning the owners of a farm in San Juan y Martinez, who at 75 centavos per each slave paid to the Junta Central Protectora de Libertos, registered four slaves in 1877, ranging in age from 11 to 60. "Expediente que contiene comprobante de pago del impuesto annual al la Junta Central Protectora de libertos," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1481, 1877. For a similar receipt but for census purposes see, "Expediente que contiene certificado de la Junta Protectora de Libertos […]" AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243, exp. 1485, 1879.

[525] There are qualifications that are required when extrapolating conclusions from the census data of 1867, 1871 and 1877. First, because each of the census were formed independent of the results by the Junta Central Protectora de Libertos and therefore do not explicitly share the same sample years, there is an assumed correlation whose accuracy cannot be 100 percent guaranteed. However, this concern is mitigated by selecting a census record of the years preceding, overlapping and following the Junta Central Protectora de Libertos' accounting. Second, Kenneth Kiple expresses several reservations concerning the official census records covered in this period, chief among them a severe undercounting of the slave population. However, despite the historical reality of planters' attempts to undermine the efforts of the Spanish government to implement gradual emancipation on the island directly emerging in this very period and by discounting enumeration of owned slaves in official registers, this record retains its usefulness as a

sets reveal how the unique nature of tobacco, where higher percentages of young and old slaves were used, influenced the degree tobacco slaves were able to achieve freedom through the Moret Law.

Jurisdiction	Article 2	Article 1	Article 4	1869	1871	1877
Matanzas	1,070	2,115	1,064	31,629	35,473	70,844
Pinar del Río	759	1,573	641	15,947	13,828	29,129

	Article 2		Article 1			Article 4		
Jurisdiction	1869	1871	1869	1871	1877	1869	1871	1877
Matanzas	3.40	3.00	6.60	5.90	3.00	3.30	3.00	1.50
Pinar del Río	4.80	5.50	9.90	11.40	5.40	4.00	11.70	2.20

Table 12: Moret Law and its impact on tobacco and sugar-based slave populations, according to total numbers freed by article, total slave populations by province and percentage of freed according to provincial numbers.[526]

The list of the Junta Central Protectora, published on August, 5, 1875, enumerates the slaves freed according to Article 2, those born between September 17, 1868 and July, 4, 1870; Article 1, those born between July, 4, 1870 and December 1874; and Article 4,

population census. This is because the prevailing sentiment of mitigating slave ownership, in the coming of emancipation, was general across the island, resulting in a consistent, although underreported accounting. Essentially, if slaves were undercounted, they were undercounted everywhere and in all categories, and therefore these records remain valuable for making detailed comparisons across Cuban jurisdictions. Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976), 65–71.

[526] For Moret Law numbers, see Bienvenido Cano and Frederico de Zalba, *El libro de los síndicos de ayuntamiento y de las juntas protectoras de libertos: Recopilación cronológica de las disposiciones legales a que deben sujetarse los actos de unos y otras* (Impr. del gobierno y capitanía general por S.M., 1875), 139–142. For total slave populations by province, see Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873*, 152–155.

the total number of slaves freed upon reaching 60 up through December 1874 (Table 12). For the Moret Law's impact on child slaves, out of thirty-two jurisdictions, Pinar del Río ranked fifth in the total number of slaves freed under Article 2 and fourth under Article 1. The sugar region of Matanzas was the leading jurisdiction under both articles, suggesting that relative to the rest of the island, both Pinar del Río and Matanzas enslaved large numbers of newborn and infant slaves. The two regions differed greatly, however, in their percentages of slaves freed. The Junta Central Protectora list, in conjunction with census data that overlaps this period, reveals the contrast between the tobacco-dominated region of Pinar del Río and the sugar-oriented economy of Matanzas. Specifically, it demonstrates the fundamental differences between the slave regimes of tobacco and sugar that led to a higher percentage of young slaves in Pinar del Río than in Matanzas.

Under Article 2, Matanzas freed 1,070 slaves and Pinar del Río freed 759 slaves. As percentages of their total slave populations according to the 1869 census, the 1,070 slaves in Matanzas freed represent 3.4 percent of the region's total slave population. For Pinar del Río the percentage of slaves freed under Article 2 was 4.8 percent. As percentages viewed according to the 1871 census, the slaves freed in Matanzas represent 3 percent of all slaves while for Pinar del Río, this number rises to 5.5 percent. The 1871 census numbers, in conjunction with Article 2, represent a difference of nearly 59 percent in the allocation of young slaves between Matanzas and Pinar del Río.

The data reveal a similar pattern for slaves freed under Article 1. Using 1869 census numbers, Article 1 resulted in Matanzas freeing 6.6 percent of its slave population and Pinar del Río freeing 9.9 percent of its slave population. Using 1871 census numbers, Matanzas freed 5.9 percent and Pinar del Río freed 11.4 percent of their respective slave populations under Article 1. The difference in allocation of young slaves freed under

Article 1 between Matanzas and Pinar del Río was nearly 46 percent in 1871. Because this article includes the number of freed slaves for an extended period (up to the end of 1874) a comparison with the 1877 census affords an additional opportunity to juxtapose the tobacco region of Pinar del Río with the sugar region of Matanzas.[527] Using 1877 totals, Matanzas freed 3 percent of its young slaves under Article 1, while Pinar del Río freed 5.4 percent. The overall percentages of *libertos* under Article 1 have dropped for both jurisdictions since 1867 and 1871, but a significant gap remains constant between Matanzas and Pinar del Río in the percentage of newborn slaves freed. This gap between the two regions' percentages of slave children is a direct result of the different labor requirements of sugar and tobacco; with tobacco's labor requirements, promoting to a higher degree, the use of slaves below prime age.

The same demographic trends driven by the exigencies of tobacco production for newborn slaves also appear in the other age extreme, elderly slaves. Under Article 4, Matanzas freed 1,064 slaves over the age of 60 and Pinar del Río freed 641 slaves over the age of 60. Although these numbers are low in comparison to the number of children freed under the Moret Law, they, too, demonstrate that slaves on vegas were more likely to be freed by this regulation than slaves on ingenios.[528] Because the totals in this category lack a corresponding year of abolition, as Articles 1 and 2 had, all three censuses from this period will be used to illustrate this impact.[529] Using the 1869 census,

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[527] The 1877 census alone measures provincial numbers, while other censuses listed numbers by jurisdictions, so Matanzas and Pinar del Río must serve as representatives of the provinces that bear their name.

[528] Rebecca Scott argues that the freeing of elderly slaves under the Moret Law accounted for 45% of the overall decline in slave numbers between 1870 and 1877. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 71–71.

[529] As noted by the authors of the *El libro de los síndicos*…the numbers of *libertos* in this category are "susceptible to variation" as the dates that cover these totals are not known with any degree of precision, nor is it known if these slaves enjoyed the privilege of freedom as a result of their condition prior to the

Matanzas freed 3.3 percent of its slaves under Article 4 and Pinar del Río freed 4.0 percent. In 1871 Matanzas freed 3.0 percent of its slaves under Article 4, while Pinar del Río freed 11.7 percent – an astounding 118 percent difference between sugar-based Matanzas and tobacco-based Pinar del Río. For 1877, the percentage of slaves freed under Article 4 drops for both provinces, but the difference between them is greater than 30 percent. This reflects that in tobacco areas and during the last stages of Cuban slavery, vegueros continued to employ comparatively higher percentages of slaves outside of the prime age range.

The most illustrative contrast between Matanzas and Pinar del Río in regard to the Moret Law appears in the overall numbers and percentages of slaves freed as a result of Articles 1, 2, and 4 combined. For Matanzas, the combined number of *libertos,* young and old, was 4,249, while for Pinar del Río, the total number of *libertos* was 2,973. Using 1877 census numbers for the two provinces' total slave populations, Matanzas freed a total of 6 percent of its slaves under the Moret Law, while Pinar del Río freed 10 percent of its slaves—a 53 percent difference between the two areas. The unique characteristics of tobacco production resulted in greater use of young and old slaves, and because the Moret Law freed young and old slaves, more tobacco slaves were able to procure their freedom.

In the previous analysis of the Moret Law the influence of tobacco cultivation upon slave demographics could be seen in the large distribution of slaves at either end of the age spectrum. While the labor requirements associated with tobacco help explain this relatively unique pattern, additional factors also prompted vegueros to acquire slaves

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publication of the Moret Law. Cano and Zalba, *El libro de los síndicos de ayuntamiento y de las juntas protectoras de libertos,* 141.

outside of prime age range. This included the central role of sugar in defining and determining slaveholding patterns in Cuba. The size and scale of sugar production in Cuba during this period positioned its planters at the forefront of all major economic, social, and official considerations regarding Cuba's hundreds of thousands of slaves, leaving them in control of the slave market and therefore the distribution of slaves on the island. The wealth of these estate owners enabled them to purchase prime-age field hands (usually male, healthy, and relatively young). Planters outside of the sugar economy, including the vegueros operating in the Vuelta Abajo, were forced to accept the remainder of available slaves.

However, because of the fundamental differences in labor requirements between sugar and tobacco production, a counterintuitive dynamic developed. Sugar planters' preference for prime-age male slaves did not have a detrimental impact upon tobacco farmers' ability to control the makeup of their dotaciones. Instead, it facilitated an enslaved workforce (the remaining women, young, and old slaves) that was conducive to tobacco production. For both labor regimes, inherent labor requirements underlined the selective makeup of their slave communities. The decision to structure sugar dotaciones around healthy males reflected the needs of the sugar mill, which coincided with tobacco cultivation's need for a range of sexes and ages. The negotiation of age and sex selection for slave populations can be seen in one final comparative analysis of Cuban slave demographics in the nineteenth century according to economically distinct regions. This comparison demonstrates the continual divergence of tobacco-based regions from sugar zones in the composition of their dotaciones.

An 1873 report indicates the age distributions of slave populations in the tobacco-dominated centers of Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, as well as the central sugar area of

Matanzas. Comparing them shows how slave age distribution is dictated by the interrelated influences of labor regime and geography. This report reflects data from 1871, one year after the Moret Law went into effect, freeing all newly born slaves and all slaves older than age sixty. As a result, the extreme age variation of newborns and the elderly – significant demographic categories within the production of tobacco – are excised from the data. However, the divergence between the demographic makeup of tobacco and sugar slave populations is still apparent.

	Age Group								
Province	4-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-25 years	25-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years	**Grand Total**
Matanzas	4,549	2,838	3,424	4,602	4,393	5,841	5,866	3,970	35,483
Pinar del Rio	2,698	1,412	1,636	1,961	1,710	2,140	1,551	720	13,828
San Cristobal	1,338	1,027	578	583	623	653	576	393	5,771
Santa Clara	980	608	607	818	768	692	695	330	5,498

Table 13: 1871 Cuban slave populations according to age (absolute numbers).[530]

[530] Santa Clara, long considered a primary sugar growing region is included as an ancillary reference point. Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873*, 154–155.

	Age Group							
Province	4-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-25 years	25-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years
Matanzas	12.82%	8.00%	9.65%	12.97%	12.38%	16.46%	16.53%	11.19%
Pinar del Rio	19.51%	10.21%	11.83%	14.18%	12.37%	15.48%	11.22%	5.21%
San Cristobal	23.18%	17.80%	10.02%	10.10%	10.80%	11.32%	9.98%	6.81%
Santa Clara	17.82%	11.06%	11.04%	14.88%	13.97%	12.59%	12.64%	6.00%

Table 14: 1871 Cuban slave populations according to age (percent of total).[531]

Beginning with the first age category, the effects of the Moret Law (which retroactively freed all children born after 1868), are tangible. The age range begins at four, rather than zero or one, and continues until the age of ten (Tables 13 and 14). Yet even in this initial category, the difference between the two different agricultural economies is apparent. Both the tobacco areas account for the largest percentages (23 and 20) of the youngest slaves out of the total slave population (Table 14). The jurisdiction of San Cristóbal (23) has almost twice as many slaves in this age range as Matanzas (13). While the numerical difference between Pinar del Río and Matanzas (7) may not immediately appear large, the percent difference between the two numbers is significant: Pinar del Río has 35 percent more slaves in this age range than Matanzas does (Table 14). Moreover, for both Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, the majority of their total slaves are concentrated in this category: Pinar del Río has 2,698 slaves in this age range, and San Cristóbal has 1,338 (Table 13). In this category farthest removed from prime-age range,

[531] Ibid.

the tobacco-dominated areas have not only concentrated their slaves in this group but also have a far larger percentage of young slaves than in other regions in Cuba.[532]

This trend of continues in the next age category as both tobacco jurisdictions sustain their leading positions in this grouping with the highest percentages of slaves in this category. While Pinar del Río continues to outpace Matanzas in the 10 to 15 age category (maintaining a substantial difference of 28 percent) San Cristóbal again leads the way with 18 percent of its slaves in this range (Table 14).[533] Combining the first two age categories, 4 to 15, facilitates additional comparisons. As evidenced by the ratio of slave children in this range for Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, 30 percent and 41 percent, respectively, tobacco regions in the Vuelta Abajo demonstrated a remarkable preference for child slaves in comparison with other economic regimes, including Matanzas, which held 21 percent of its slaves in this age range.[534] In Cuba's plantation economy child slaves were more likely to be a part of tobacco cultivation than any other agricultural economy. In terms of family formation large percentages of slave children are critical signs of creolization which in itself is a reflection of balanced sex and age ratios among the slave community. This feature is important in furthering the understanding of where and under what circumstances slave families in Cuba existed.[535]

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[532] This representation of Matanzas' slave distribution conforms to Laird Bergad's assertion that "any increase in the Matanzas slave population was linked to imports rather than to reproduction." Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 193.

[533] The high percentage of slaves in this age range corresponds to a similar use in the Chesapeake region, where slaves between twelve and fifteen were considered productive laborers in cultivating tobacco. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," fn 12.

[534] By comparison, in Cuban coffee production, Van Norman argues a ratio of 10 percent for slaves under 15 represented a "substantial contingent" of the overall slave population. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 125–126; In an extensive study of one cafetal, Theresa Singleton has noted five children out of an overall slave population of 81. Theresa A Singleton, "An Archaeological Study of Slavery at a Cuban Coffee Plantation," in *Dialogues in Cuban Archaeology*, ed. L. Antonio Curet, Shannon Lee Dawdy, and Gabino La Rosa Corzo (University of Alabama Press, 2005), 190.

[535] Van Norman describes a similar process for coffee production in Cuba, as for these slaves, a "pattern of creolization through reproduction and narrowing sex distribution" was facilitated by the particular

As the ages of slaves increase, the stark discrepancy between tobacco and sugar decreases, beginning at the age category of 20 to 25. In this group, the gap between Pinar del Río and Matanzas narrows significantly: the former jurisdiction has just eight percent more of its slaves in this range than the latter area (Table 14). Slaves in this age range are approaching prime-age status, and the demographic patterns reflect this. It should be noted that determining prime age range is a matter of interpretation. There is a lack of consensus among both contemporary records and historical analysis as to the age spectrum of prime field hands, and this question is made even more problematic by differences in time periods and labor regimes. Slaves of all ages were forced to work, but at its most broad interpretation, field hands could be considered prime, or at least some variation of prime status, beginning at age 12 and continuing through age 60. With more precision, Moreno Fraginals suggests that prime age corresponded to the largest percentages of slaves on ingenios, which for the nineteenth century were slaves ranging in age from 15 to 40 as this group represented 90 percent of sugar's workforce.[536] Within this range it is possible for even greater nuance of interpretation. Alejandro de la Fuente suggests that 18 to 30 could constitute prime age and that the prime age of the unskilled in that group was 25, corresponding roughly to the average age of Africans imported.[537]

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demographic makeup of cafetales. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 126. Also regarding slave demographic impacts upon creolization, Berlin and Morgan argue that some planters "left their mark on slave society" through their decisions to utilize a greater range in age and sex of slaves and as a result facilitated important communal practices, including reproduction and creolization. Ira Berlin and Philip D Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 10.

[536] Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio*, 2:85.

[537] For de la Fuente's assessment, it should be noted that this was well before the nineteenth century, although in what is perhaps the most authoritative account of slave age distribution, Higman corroborates a similar prime age structure of 18-45, at least in the British Caribbean. Alejandro de la Fuente, "Sugar and Slavery in Early Colonial Cuba," in *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2004), 124, 147; Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 135–147.

Another resource for determining the value of slaves according to age, sex, and health can be found in official guidelines, published in 1855, for insuring slaves. According to these charts, the value of healthy male slaves reached 600 pesos beginning at age 19 and remained above 600 pesos until age 38. Within this age and monetary range, a peak of 690 pesos was assigned to slaves thirty years old, suggesting this was the most valuable age for a male slave. For healthy female slaves, the range of highest value was between the ages of 19 and 36: all slaves in this grouping had a value of at least 500 pesos, and the most valuable age was 19.[538]

Using these rough estimates as the general prime age grouping for the data addressed here, in the age range between 25 and 50, the distribution in Pinar del Río (39 percent) nearly matches that of Matanzas (45 percent). For Matanzas, this is to be expected, because sugar cultivation required immense physical labor. Yet since the cultivation of tobacco facilitated the use of slaves outside prime age, it is somewhat unusual that in Pinar del Río, more than a third of its slaves were in this age range. However, this large concentration of slaves suggests that tobacco neither prohibited nor discouraged the use of such laborers and that at least in Pinar del Río, the age desirability and physical durability of this group proved attractive to tobacco growers. The primary position of Pinar del Río in the Vuelta Abajo region, where the wealth of the agricultural industry was concentrated, also explains its ability to procure these most expensive and most in-demand slaves. Outside of Pinar del Río, the epicenter for tobacco cultivation, this ability diminished even for those within the Vuelta Abajo—as indicated by the low percentages of slaves in this age range in San Cristóbal (Table 14).

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538 Félix Erenchun, *Anales de La Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año de 1855*, vol. 3 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1859), 1493–1496.

Regarding the last category, ages 50 to 60, the impact of the Moret Law is again seen. Most of the slaves in this category were concentrated at the low end of this ten-year age range, a result of the decision by planters to evade the stipulation that planters free all slaves upon reaching the age of sixty.[539] For Pinar del Río, this corresponds to a low percentage in the previous category, 40 to 50, as opposed to a more balanced rate in the 30 to 40 range. Arguably, slave ages were being concentrated at either edge of the 50-year old category. The desire of planters to manipulate the reported ages of their slaves would apply to nearly all slave owners. But the particularly low range for Pinar del Río—5 percent in this last category (a 44 percent difference compared to Matanzas)—can be accounted for by tobacco planters' decision to hold more older slaves than sugar planters held (Table 3).[540]

Beyond a comparatively higher inclusion rate of female slaves, the specific labor requirements of tobacco cultivation selectively influenced the age makeup of this slave population. Tobacco planters faced increasing competition over access to slaves in the nineteenth century, as a result of sugar's expansion. But they could replenish their dotaciones in a way that was either not available or not desired by the ingenio owners – natural increase through reproduction. The choice to augment their labor force by way of

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[539] Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 69.

[540] Substantiating this difference for Pinar del Río, several contemporary accounts describe ingenios as largely devoid of elderly slaves. One account from Mary Lowell, speaking of slavery in general and in particular of sugar estates, notes that "it is a rare thing to see a very old" slave. Mary Gardner Lowell, *New Year in Cuba: Mary Gardner Lowell's Travel Diary, 1831-1832*, The New England Women's Diaries Series (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003), 89. Similarly, Richard Madden claims that in some plantations, not a single elderly slave exists. Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 126. Maturin Ballou stated that conditions on the worst plantations meant that "few hard worked slaves survive to the age of sixty"—an assessment that specifically addressed the Moret Law, which he argued was largely ignored and irrelevant in the first place. Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 277. According to David Turnbull a sugar slave, beginning his enslavement before the age of twenty (16 or 18) – can only expect to live ten more years. By contrast, Turnbull estimates a a life expectancy for coffee slaves of twenty-five or thirty years "without ever having endured the same severity of toil or the same intensity of suffering." Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 294.

natural reproduction rather than through the importation of African slaves may have been forced upon the vegueros. This was largely due to the economic influence of the "sugarocracy" that controlled the Cuban slave market by setting demand for specific workers. Yet this was also a natural choice for tobacco planters, because the specific labor required to cultivate tobacco encouraged the use of women, children, and the elderly. Slaves in this demographic were not capable of handling the intensity of sugar labor, but this only made these slaves more available and cheaper in the marketplace, with the result that they were considerably more attractive to tobacco planters. The impact upon this slave community was unmistakable: the presence of higher percentages of female, child and elderly slaves created the viable conditions for family formations among this particular community of slaves.

SLAVE HOUSING ON CUBAN PLANTATIONS

Another critical component of the material lives of tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río – housing units – not only further distinguished this slave community as unique, but also helped substantiate the ability of slaves to form family connections under this regime. The essential importance of slave quarters is summed up by B. W. Higman, who states that "the nature of slave housing affected health and disease patterns…while its spatial organization played a role in determining family structure and fertility."[541] Van Norman reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that "slaves experienced plantation life through their interaction with the physical structures and spaces" of the type of farm they lived upon and that slave housing "was arguably the most important material element" in the fashioning of slave life.[542] This is largely because the type of slave housing, in its

[541] Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 219.
[542] Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 166–167.

prohibition or promotion of slave autonomy, had an outsize influence in the ability of slaves to form partnerships and maintain important familial linkages.[543]

Yet despite the importance of slave housing historical records concerning household arrangements and family formation within these structures "are often hard to find and difficult to interpret," according to Stanley L. Engerman and B. W. Higman in their overview of slave demographic conditions.[544] More recently, Cuban historians such as Gloria García and Jose Ortega have voiced similar concerns about a dearth of sources on this subject, with Ortega noting that "a comprehensive study of slave household patterns in Cuban plantations remains to be written."[545] However, a comparison of the different structures Cuban planters employed to house slaves holds the potential to delineate the conditions which afforded slaves the greatest opportunity for autonomous activities, including family formation.

Just as work requirements structured slave demographic patterns, plantation housing also varied according to particular economies and labor practices. Writing of the "internal spatial economy of the plantation" Higman notes that for slave housing, the "patterning of this structure varied with the demands of the principal crop, the size and physical setting of the plantation," and planters' concern for profit and control over the slave community.[546] In Cuba, this was also true, as the physical composition and spatial

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[543] Higman explicitly links sexual intercourse between slaves to the degree that housing structures permitted unsupervised or unrestricted movement at night. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 373.

[544] Stanley L. Engerman and B. W. Higman, "The Demographic Structure of the Caribbean Slave Societies in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *General History of the Caribbean: The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, ed. Franklin W. Knight, vol. 3 (Unesco Publishing, 1997), 87.

[545] García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 29–30; Jose Guadalupe Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844" (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007), 205.

[546] B.W. Higman, "The Spatial Economy of Jamaican Sugar Plantations: Cartographic Evidence from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Historical Geography* 13, no. 1 (January 1987): 17.

arrangement of housing structures largely corresponded to particular crop economies. Sugar, and to a lesser degree coffee, imposed the prison-like barracks known as *barracones,* while tobacco employed the independent or separate housing systems known as *bohíos*, or huts.

In terms of sugar, the demographic deprivations endemic to the ingenio extended to, and were largely influenced by, the barracón, "by far the most notorious slave quarter."[547] As a symbol of slave life on sugar estates, the barracón has attracted considerable attention from historians nearly all of whom emphasize its detrimental impact on the slave community. For Pérez de la Riva, the barracón and its overcrowding of slaves in this structure created "detestable conditions" that resulted in the "most deplorable consequences" for these slaves.[548] In her discussion of the slave family in Cuba Maria del Carmen Barcia points to one critical consequence, the negative impact the barracón had upon slave marriages. According to Carmen Barcia the advent of the barracón in the 1840s corresponded to a declining marriage rate among Cuban slaves, with the percentage of slaves listed as married dropping from 36 percent in 1846, to 20 percent in 1861, and 15 percent in 1870.[549] Moreno Fraginals adds to these assessments

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[547] Theresa A Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations," *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (2001): 102. According to Jose Ortega, owing to its development alongside the industrial revolution, and sharing a focus upon maximizing efficiency and control, the barracón was unique to Caribbean slavery. Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 208.

[548] Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El Barracón: Esclavitud Y Capitalismo En Cuba* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1978), 31–32. A similar assessment led Fernando Ortiz to conclude, "better were the slaves that lived in separate housing, in *bohíos*." Fernando Ortiz, *Los Negros Esclavos*, Pensamiento Cubano (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 130. Italics in original. Ortiz makes the point that at times, bohíos could also be called barracones, especially in in their aggregation within a single estate. Rebecca Scott, citing Pérez de la Riva, also addresses the lack of precision in both terms, although I think that the ambivalence is not very pronounced, and like Scott, I restrict descriptions of slave housing to the word used in the original account, and maintain barracón to mean barracks and bohío to mean hut-style housing. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 18, n. 40.

[549] Barcia, *La Otra Familia*, 75. This is not to say that the ingenio prohibited the formation of slave families. In fact, in two large-scale examples Barcia cites two sugar plantations that had high rates of listed slave marriages along with a large percentage of children attached to these unions. However, it should be

while providing the most striking condemnation of this type of housing on slave life, contending that "the plantations of the time were prison-like places, virtually without women (only 10.23 percent), children (8.15 percent), or old people (3.13 percent). They were sugar-producing jails in which there were no family relations."[550]

Nineteenth century observers also remarked on the reputation of the barracón. The former slave Esteban Montejo described the barracón as filthy as "*carajo*" (shit) and "suffocating"; poor ventilation made them "more furnaces than room."[551] Frederick Townshend claimed that barracones were "one of the most horrible dens imaginable"; he added that they were "pestiferious (sic) dungeons" where no daylight or air could pass, except through the door. They permitted minimal material luxuries while "the worst filth covered the floor, furniture and walls, which also were alive with vermin."[552] Richard Madden ultimately concluded that these quarters were "very miserable places, unfit for the habitation of wild beasts."[553]

In addition to the ignominious conditions of the barracón many nineteenth-century writers noted the closed space of this structure and the security it afforded planters. As one of the barracón's defining features many considered the barrack-style

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noted that these estates were unusual in that they were owned and operated by the religious order of the Jesuits and they were in existence in the eighteenth century rather than in the nineteenth century when the ingenio would have become more closed and regimented. Additionally, these ingenios allowed slaves to live in bohíos rather than barracones. This last point, the presence of bohíos remains a critical component of estates allowing for family formation. Ibid., 139.

[550] Moreno Fraginals, "AFRICA IN CUBA," 192.

[551] Montejo, *Biografía de Un Cimarrón*, 22–23.

[552] Townshend, *Wild Life in Florida, with a Visit to Cuba*, 195. Egor Sivers, a nineteenth century Russian, writer and traveler, mentions excessive cruelty on certain plantations—implying estates with barracones—as those plantations have "hundreds of slaves" who are fed poorly and whose numbers are depleted. Sivers says that these conditions impose a "deplorable life" upon their dotaciones. As cited in Borís Lukín, "Viajes de Rusia a Cuba a Mediados Del Siglo XIX," in *Historia de Cuba*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Academia de las Ciencias de la URSS, 1979), 86.

[553] Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 161.

housing as resembling jails more than living quarters.[554] Traditionally made of more solid material than the bohíos, with reinforced walls and a system of locks, the barracón often incorporated watchtowers and guards with dogs, making it a contained and secured arrangement. This heightened security motivated Bernard de Chateausalins, in 1831, to specifically recommend the barrack-like structure of the barracón, because its single door and barred window effectively prevented communication among slaves at night.[555] For de Chateausalins, a secured housing structure prevented potential rebellious activity, running away, and overt resistance by slaves; it also precluded communication between slaves that also might encourage this type of activity.

The barracón reflected not only the needs of the regime that utilized - large-scale sugar slavery - it was also a product of a particular period in Cuban slavery. As the nineteenth century progressed, the need for control over Cuba's slaves corresponded to the exponentially increasing number of slaves arriving from Africa. A large percentage of new imports were housed on ingenios, so the barracón housing structure became a defining feature of sugar-based slavery. The barracón system was officially mandated by 1842 regulations that required this type housing arrangement, or at the minimum a central building that could be locked at night. Notably, this regulation also stipulates that male and female slaves should be segregated in these buildings.[556] There is, however, some debate among scholars concerning when the barracón originated and how prevalent it

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[554] Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford, Conn: Hartford publishing company, 1871), 38; Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 157; Townshend, *Wild Life in Florida, with a Visit to Cuba*, 194; W. M. L Jay, *My Winter in Cuba.* (New York; Hartford: E.P. Dutton & Co.; Church Press, 1871), 228–229; Edwin Atkins and Jay I. Kislak Collection (Library of Congress), *Sixty Years in Cuba: Reminiscences of Edwin F. Atkins.* (Cambridge: Privately printed at the Riverside Press, 1926), 91.

[555] As quoted in Pérez de la Riva, *El Barracón*, 19–20. See also, García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración*, 133.

[556] García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 85–90.

was. Rebecca Scott argues that while the barracón was a "predominant symbol," it was not adopted universally across the sugar economy; rather, only the largest ingenios employed this arrangement.[557] Other attempts at contextualizing the barracón include Pérez de la Riva, who insists on a distinction within the barracón system. De la Riva argues that there were two different types of barracones, one of which evolved from an early iteration as the nineteenth century progressed.[558] Laird Bergad offers a more concrete timeline as he argues that "before the 1830s there are no records of slave populations living in barracones"; however, he contends that due to sugar's expansion, they "became the rule in rural Cuba by the mid-nineteenth century."[559] This view reflects the significant security upgrade that the barracones represented for Cuban planters in light of La Escalera, the largest slave rebellion on the island, in 1844. If the barracones were not in widespread use before, in the aftermath of 1844, these new structures would eventually constitute a defining component of sugar slavery in Cuba.[560]

Other historians continue to argue that barracón-style housing emerged even earlier than this, so that the barracón had more time to affect the material lives of slaves. Several historians draw on the statements of de Chateausalins in 1831 to place the origins of the barracón in the 1830s.[561] Manuel Barcia situates its origin even earlier, in the "mid-

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557 Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 17.
558 Pérez de la Riva, *El Barracón*, 18–31.
559 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 77.
560 For a good discussion of the prevailing sense of rebellious activity during this period where "Cuba was alive with the energies of a resistance movement during the 1830s and, and especially the 1840s" see Aisha Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads: Cuban Slaves and the Conspiracy of La Escalera, 1841--1844" (Ph.D., History, New York University, 2007), 24.
561 Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio*, 1:71; María del Carmen Barcia and Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "El Debilitamiento de Las Relaciones Sociales Esclavistas. Del Reformismo Liberal a La Revolución Independentista," in *Historia de Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 1994, 417; Lourdes S. Domínguez, "Fuentes Arqueológicas En El Estudio de La Esclavitud En Cuba," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba*, 1986, 273.

1820s"; he suggests that the barracón arose as part of a larger effort to curtail unauthorized activity at night by slaves. Gloria García also argues that the barracón originated in the 1820s; she cites a causal relationship between planters in this era locking in their slave dotaciones at night and numerous slave riots.[562] In an archeological study of coffee estates in Matanzas, Theresa Singleton suggests a forerunner to the heightened security measures of the barracón system: a large, prison-like wall, complete with iron gating and watchtower, surrounding and enclosing the slave housing. It is not known how widespread these walls were, but Singleton dates them to the 1820s as well.[563]

Within the historiography there remains a lack of a comprehensive or quantifiable understanding of when and to what degree the barracón structures prevailed. But where they did prevail, they certainly had a profound and deleterious impact on the slave community housed in them. They inhibited slaves' ability to form and maintain families through the segregation of sexes while the secured, prison-based restrictions limited mobility of slaves and the space in which to act autonomously. Ultimately, the extreme numbers of slaves subjected to this system suggest that the important debate is not when these structures were used, but rather for how many slaves they were used. Beginning at least in the 1840s and continuing for another four or five decades, hundreds of thousands of sugar-based slaves faced the abject horrors and severe restrictions imposed by the barracón.

In stark contrast to sugar, the bohío was defining housing structure used by tobacco planters in the Vuelta Abajo to house slaves on their vegas. However, any discussion of Cuban bohíos is inherently problematic, due to questions relating to their

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[562] Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*, 116; García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 34–35.
[563] Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations," 103–104.

primitive construction which limited both the permanency and value of these structures. Coarsely constructed of local and relatively unsophisticated materials, including guano and royal palm, bohíos traditionally took the form of a rectangle with a gabled roof and could be quickly and cheaply assembled with slave labor.[564] Writing in the nineteenth century, James Rawson describes these dwellings as a "small hut…formed entirely of the palm-tree. Its trunk split into poles, and tied firmly together by strips of bark, forms the frame and rafters. The footstalk, or part of the leaf that encircles the trunk, is spread out, and sewed to the sides of the hut, and being about five feet long and three wide, and secure against the weather. The roof is next thatched with the long stems of the palm-leaf, cut into pieces three feet long, and tied to the rafters, forming a covering about a foot thick, through which neither heat nor wet can penetrate. The door and window-shutter alone are of planks, the floor being of clay or mud."[565]

This crude construction helps explain why in hundreds of judicial proceedings involving the estates of slave-owning vegueros, bohíos are never listed or described as part of their holdings. However, this is not to say that these structures did not hold value. In 1873, the free black Ignacio Valdés listed among his possessions three bohíos used for various cultivation and storing purposes. In official proceedings these bohíos were judged

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[564] The best nineteenth-century account of Cuban bohíos is provided by, Anselmo Suárez y Romero, *Coleccion de articulos de Anselmo Suárez y Romero* (Establecimiento tip. La Antilla, 1859), 202–203.

[565] Rawson is speaking about the huts of rural Cubans after the period of slavery, but the description, in its simplicity and the materials used, closely resembles that of the slaves on a vega. James Rawson, *Cuba* (New-York,, 1847), 59–60. Carl Sauer argues that the form of the bohío that slaves would eventually replicate in Pinar del Río resembled some of the early features of the Arawaks, including that it was "circular in outline and bellshaped in profile. The large size required the setting of upright posts and poles at short intervals, the longer ones converging in a peak, formed and held by lashings of strong, supple wood vines (bejucos), which are still thus used" while the "cross members of the frame were thin pieces of wood." Moreover, "at present there is much use of hollow palm trunks, split into narrow strips and used sheathing in roofs and as battens or siding on walls, perhaps a carryover from aboriginal days. The preferred thatch was of grass…or fronds of fan palms. Inferior roofing was provided by the tough leaves of bihai…or the leaves of pinnate palms." Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 63.

to have a combined value of 35 pesos.[566] Without knowing the size or condition of these units, this sum is nevertheless marginal—even more so when divided among three structures – so it is understandable that these units are excluded in nearly all other estate filings.[567]

Another possible explanation for why these bohíos are not listed in the historical records of tobacco estates is that they may have been considered the property of the slaves themselves. Slaves not only built their own bohíos, but arguably laid claim to them; a claim that planters had little reason to contest considering their limited value. Anselmo Suarez y Romero, writing in 1840, implies slave ownership of bohío structures, noting that during holidays, time is "granted to the slaves to make their bohíos."[568] One nineteenth-century traveler also describes a slave building a bohío with help from another slave. This process occurred during their time away from the primary obligation of plantation work and over the course of three months.[569] Although direct ownership cannot be established in this case, the time and energy involved represented a considerable investment that could have justified ownership of this structure by the slave who built the bohío. In addition, numerous court records when describing slaves' actions in bohíos, label the housing units as "their" bohío. Moreover, slaves certainly possessed other goods, many of which were worth more than 35 pesos, giving credence to the

566 "Expediente sobre intestado del moreno libre Ignacio Valdés," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 80, exp. 383, 1873.
567 For contrast, Pérez de la Riva notes that a barracón could cost between 4,000 -10,000 pesos. Pérez de la Riva, *El Barracón*, 20.
568 Romero, *Coleccion de articulos de Anselmo Suárez y Romero*, 202.
569 Demoticus Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes* (New-York: D. Appleton & Co, 1856), 150. For a discussion of bohío construction by slaves as well as how the social or communal aspect of bohío construction relates uniquely to Cuban slave culture, see Francisco Pérez de la Riva, *La Habitación Rural En Cuba*, Contribución Del Grupo Guamá. Antropología, No. 26 (La Habana: Tall. Tip. de Editorial Lex, 1952), 46.

argument that these structures could belong to the slave rather than the plantation owner.[570]

Another potential problem is the scarcity of first-hand bohío descriptions specific to Cuban tobacco production. However, the historical record does include a few general depictions of bohíos on various Cuban plantations in the nineteenth century. And although some of these accounts describe bohíos on sugar estates, the structure of the bohío, on either an ingenio or a vega, is consistent in its effect on slave life and slave relations. In relation to the use of the bohío across disparate slave economies this work argues that the impact of crop specific work requirements upon slave demographic patterns would effectively relegate the use of the bohío to Cuban vegas over the course of the nineteenth century. This was especially true after the demise of the coffee industry and as expansion in the sugar economy led to decreased use of bohíos on sugar estates.[571] As a result, the importance of the bohío in shaping the material conditions of the slave community is most readily identified with tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century.

In one contemporary account of a Cuban bohío, Alvaro Reynoso, in 1861, began his description of this housing arrangement with a critique of the barracón system. While Reynoso wrote that the benefits of the barracón system included security and the better vigilance that planters are able to exercise over their slaves, he also contended that the

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[570] This claim is complicated by the traditional enumeration of slave possessions in official documents—slave-owned goods only enter the record in cases of theft or destruction.

[571] Concerning the housing of slaves on coffee estates, Van Norman provides an important link to tobacco in his conclusion that the "shift towards barracks housing on ingenios underscores the distinctiveness of the coffee experience." In the use of bohíos, coffee is an interesting corollary to tobacco in relation to the shared contrasts with sugar and the latter regime's comprehensive use of the barracones to house its slaves. Yet it is also a complicated corollary, as coffee would embrace both housing structures, depending upon area and time, while there is little or no evidence of the barrack-style units on vegas. As a result, coffee remains a middle ground between bohío use in tobacco and barracón use in sugar. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 143–144.

ability to prevent social disorder is mitigated by placing slaves in the worst housing conditions. As this left rebellion as the only option for slaves, according to Reynoso, he suggested improvements upon the barracón structure: including enough room for men to exist in hygienic conditions, enclosed granaries as a means to augment the slave diet, and kitchens with adequate ventilation. Additionally, Reynoso argued that next to their home there should be a place for the slaves' livestock (pigs and birds) as well as area for a small garden. The benefits of such a structure, according to Reynoso, could be seen on the ingenio belonging to José R. O-Farrill. Since this dotación housed bohíos, rather than barracones, it is possible to see how this particular housing structure led to advantageous circumstances for slaves. For this slave community, the plantation included both fruit arbors and *platanos,* while their small huts were bounded by well-cultivated gardens. From these conditions, Reynoso concluded that these slaves lived in great comfort and ease. Reynoso was not suggesting that all ingenios used this type of accommodation; in fact, Reynoso found this housing structure noteworthy. Yet, in his estimation, this form of housing "is the only means of providing to the slave the best proportion of possible enjoyment, placing them among the constitution of family, for which purpose we must encourage if not from principle at least well-understood interest."[572] Reynoso's characterizations of "happiness" among this community may be subjective, but he is not singular in his association of happiness as well as family formation with particular housing structures, especially in contrast to the barracón.

In the same period, in an essay detailing the typical Cuban bohío, Anselmo Suárez described a structure that he declares "with little difference" applies to all such

[572] Reynoso, *Estudios Progresivos Sobre Varias Materias Cientificas, Agricolas e Industriales, Colleccion de Escritos Sobre Los Cultivos de La Caña, Café, Tabaco, Maiz... Por D. Alvaro Reynoso,...*, 327–331.

independent huts across slave regimes. Suárez also speaks to the customary operations within the bohío, specifically social actions that this housing configuration facilitates. Notably, slaves in these units congregate mainly and often in the small living room where there is the "perennial fire, there they cook, there they eat, there they converse."[573] According to the author, the bedroom of the bohío houses the clothing drawer, a large straw basket with "god knows how many things inside," and the crates or baskets in which slaves rock their little children. Godchildren and relatives also sleep in the bedroom, while the masters of the hut sleep in the living room.[574] According to Suárez, the bohío also facilitated independent food production by slaves. Suárez described a barbeque outside the front door that served as the primary means of cooking corn, rice, peanuts, sesame seeds, and okra, among various other food staples that "they have harvested in the conucos" as well as nearby a pigsty and a chicken coop.[575]

The connection between independent housing and the support of familial arrangements and increased liberty was not lost on a plantation owner of the nineteenth century, José Montalvo y Castillo. This planter argued that "the only relief for the African slave is his hut, his family, and the independence and liberty of the early evening."[576] Montalvo was writing in response to the 1842 regulation requiring the barracón system; a regulation which he argued made it impossible for slaves to live as human beings. In the same period, the Marqués de Campo Florido intentionally structured his estate's housing units in a manner that addressed the concerns that José Montalvo had about the humane treatment of slaves – specifically the need to form families and the ability to maintain

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[573] Romero, *Coleccion de articulos de Anselmo Suárez y Romero*, 203.
[574] Ibid.
[575] Ibid., 203–204. For a similar connection between bohío housing structures and the existence of independent staple production by slaves, but on a coffee estate, see Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.*, 105.
[576] As quoted in, García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 35.

these connections. The Marqués, at least in his own account, promoted slave family formation: on his farm, male "slaves live in union with their women in the bohíos, where they have their children."[577] Attaching significant value to this specific housing arrangement because it privileged individual over communal structures, the Marqués also suggested that slaves understood these structures as belonging to themselves as his slaves viewed their bohíos "like a sacred property in which they gathered everything that they legally acquired through work they do in their own behalf on their own time."[578] An additional observation by Alexander von Humboldt is unequivocal in connecting the bohío to the formation of families in Cuba's slave community. Accordingly, Humboldt noted that "the greater the number of slaves established with their families, in cabins which they deem their own, the more rapid is their multiplication."[579] Beyond emphasizing the importance of spatial formation and the impact it can have on both creolization and ownership status, Humboldt further maintained the slave "who is married and lives in a separate hut…finds comfort in the lap of his needy family at the end of his workday, has an immeasurably better lot than the isolated slave who gets lost in the crowd."[580]

Scholars have also addressed how spaces, either allowing or prohibiting family formation and independent activity, determined the degree slaves' controlled these fundamental aspects of their lives. Steven Mintz provides a platform for understanding the symbolic value of housing in the context of Caribbean slavery. As he says, it was there and in the immediate vicinity that "decisions are made, food is prepared and eaten,

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[577] Ibid., 36.
[578] Ibid.
[579] Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 143.
[580] Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 161; Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, 256.

the household group-whatever its composition-sleeps and socializes, children are conceived and born, death is ceremonialized."[581] Spatial relationships matter, especially in the home. As the American slave scholar Charles Joyner argues, people are influenced by the space around them "with the effect that their work may be made easier or harder; their personalities may be stimulated or relaxed by the space they inhabit."[582] Homes were the central location for many slave activities: cooking, eating, and sleeping, as well as dancing, music making, and praying. Homes structured relations between parents and children, spouses, and friends, and on this essential level, the difference between the barracón and the bohío was profound. If these activities and relations were determined by the degree to which housing arrangements allowed slaves to make independent choices, the autonomous space of the bohío augmented both the measure and range of options available to slaves. When slaves were not limited by a barrack-style arrangement, they themselves could decide who slept where and on what, who ate what and what one ate out of, where one sat and what they sat, who they were able to associate with, and when they could do so.[583] As a result the use bohíos on tobacco estates, rather than the barracón, engineered spaces for independent activity manifested most clearly in family formation and enhanced mobility among this slave community.

In the few accounts addressing Cuban slave housing forms and the impact specific spatial forms held for the slave community historians have also been explicit in their understanding of the role the bohío played for slaves. Two of the more definitive

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[581] Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (New Brunswick [N.J.]: Aldine Transaction, 2007), 231.
[582] Joyner also speaks to the role of architecture in informing perspective; he states that "changes in their housing may shape changes in their world view as well." Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: a South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 117–118.
[583] Joyner asserts that one of the most significant aspects of independent living that allows for family formation is that "when the slave family was together in its home, gathered around the fireplace, the master and his power were shut out for the moment." Ibid., 126.

statements are provided by Carmen Barcia who contends that the bohío "was the typical habitation of the slave family" and Van Norman who argues "the use of smaller living structures was important to the structure of the non-working life of slaves."[584] According to Van Norman it was in these units that slaves were most easily able to interact socially and sustain family life. The contemporary and scholarly depictions of these housing structure, by noting their importance to slave "independence," "happiness" and family formation, substantiate the significance of the bohío in structuring the material life of slaves.

SLAVE MOBILITY ON PLANTATIONS

Along with distinct population demographics and housing structures tobacco slavery in Pinar del Río was also distinguished by a greater degree of mobility compared with slavery elsewhere in Cuba. This heightened mobility was caused by a variety of factors however, underlying all of these were the labor requirements and practices of tobacco cultivation in this region. Relative to sugar, the size of tobacco operations did not necessitate a labor force of such scale that the threat of large-scale rebellion was pervasive. This decreased risk obviated the need for enclosed and secure barrack-style housing units and instead permitted detached and individual huts which allowed for relative freedom of movement for slaves living in these homes. The reliance on the bohío as the primary slave housing unit is also explained by the more balanced gender ratios and higher percentages of children used in tobacco production and that necessitated independent housing arrangements. Tobacco cultivation in this region also dictated the substantial use of provision plots, *conucos*, which required access from field to house, and as a result increased independent activity in relation to slave mobility. The structure

[584] Barcia, *La Otra Familia*, 138; Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 33.

of tobacco as a labor regime granted slaves greater control over their time and mobility. This freedom of movement was the result of multiple influences; yet it is the bohío that most promoted this mobility.

The importance of the bohío in supporting slave mobility is made clearer by its stark contrast with the barracón. The model of the ingenio and its barracones has led scholars to view the Cuban plantation as a closed system that prohibited slave communication and mobility. This traditional view is most clearly expressed by Moreno Fraginals, who characterizes the barracones as "virtual strongholds, with a jail-like structure, and a general state of noncomunication (sic) prevailed between the inmates."[585] More recently, this interpretation has been criticized by historians who assert that underground communication on rural estates did exist within the slave community. Gloria García maintains that plantations were not completely closed off because "plantations simply could not exist in isolation from each other." Sharing this perspective Aisha Finch has also argued that "rural plantation communities were not hermetically sealed from the outside world, and in many ways, they were not closed at all."[586]

The awareness that plantations were not comprehensively insular holds important implications for acknowledging the degree of mobility that Cuban slaves practiced – especially under what conditions this mobility flourished. Borrowing from Douglas Egerton's notion of the "twilight world" marking the social and physical distance between slavery and freedom, Finch describes plantations throughout Cuba's countryside as engendering constant mobility within estate boundaries, including free blacks visiting from outside the estate, often illegally, as well as temporarily residing on the plantation.

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[585] Moreno Fraginals, "AFRICA IN CUBA," 189.
[586] García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 36; Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 44.

This mobility also included movement away from the plantation: at night, slaves could and did freely move about for a variety of personal and political reasons – an occurrence Finch labels "seepage" and describes as a "steady hemorrhage."[587] For García, the sheer number of rural slaves and the variety of options available to them, along with unenforced regulations, ensured that "rural slaves maintained regular contact" with multiple different groups and individuals, including both free blacks and whites.[588]

While these views testifying to high degrees of slave mobility stem from investigations of large sugar estates it should be noted that the very nature of the work requirements under this regime severely limited such ruptures in the plantation system. The arguments of García and Finch, while offering important examples of the ability of slaves to move more freely than previously understood, are belied by the reality of this economic structure, as the details of their descriptions reveal. García describes the difficult degree of contestation by slaves that was required if they were to keep from being isolated while Finch argues that mobility was most often practiced only by a select group.[589] The dictates of the sugar process and the form of the barracón were arranged, above all else, to generate "maximum efficiency and production" according to Jose Ortega. [590] As a result, Ortega contends "the spatial dynamics of the sugar mill complex rarely provided slaves with personal privacy" or opportunities for unfettered

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[587] Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 77. 83. For Egerton see, Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
[588] García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 36.
[589] Concerning the select individuals that might have opportunities for mobility off the plantation, David Turnbull remarks on the possibility that on a few large plantations slaves, if they were "favored individuals" might be allowed to go into town. Turnbull is talking about sugar and coffee estates and with the caveat that this circumstance was only permitted when the crop season was over, "but never by any chance, or under any circumstances, during the busy period of the year." Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade*, 285.
[590] Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 185.

movement.[591] Moreover, the central interest in maintaining and operating a large dotación ensured that for sugar planters, "movement-minimization was more important than social control in creating the spatial economy."[592]

Nevertheless, Cuban plantations were not impermeable. Individuals, goods, and ideas crossed estate boundaries, allowing slaves to reconfigure many of the physical constraints inherent to the plantation structure. However, the spaces that restricted movement most were on large-scale ingenios dominated by the barracón. The spaces that did not were on vegas marked by independent structures. The differences were profound, especially in the impact on the material conditions of the slave community.

In terms of tobacco, the specific work routines and requirements of this crop granted a high degree of mobility to slaves laboring under this system. Berlin and Morgan contend that slaves toiling in tobacco production "experienced considerable mobility" as a result of the crop's ability to be grown quickly and among numerous sites within a defined area, which "encouraged continuous short-distance migration."[593] Thomas Salazar, writing in the nineteenth century, mentioned that it common for owners of vegas to not live on their farms, especially on the larger estates. He suggested that on these larger estates, the slaves either lived on the vegas with an overseer or travelled on a daily basis to their vegas.[594] Contemporary travelers also alluded to the fact that tobacco slaves lived apart from the main quarters of the plantation owner. In 1880, Byron

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[591] Ibid., 203.

[592] Higman, "The Spatial Economy of Jamaican Sugar Plantations," 17.

[593] Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 9.The editors also make an unusual but illustrative comparison of tobacco slaves to "slave lumberman and cowboys." Ibid. This thesis is supported by Walsh in her study of North American tobacco systems. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820."

[594] Thomas Salazar, *Cartilla Agraria Para El Cultivo Del Tabaco* (Impr. del Gobierno y Capitanía General y Real Hacienda por S.M., 1850), 60.

Andrews observed a tobacco plantation located along the Río Hondo in Pinar del Río. He noted that on this particular vega, more than one hundred slaves were cultivating five hundred acres of tobacco and that these slaves lived "at some distance" from the main residence.[595] Another writer in the same period maintained that slaves living in bohíos, unlike those in barracones, "oftentimes, instead of sleeping, mounted their mares and went to the estates in the vicinity."[596]

Further evidence of this movement by tobacco-based slaves is seen in an 1842 judicial inquiry in Pinar del Río. This court case arose out of an altercation between two slaves, one of whom was the apprehended slave José Córdova. Córdova, listed as belonging to Doña Gabriela Baño, owner of a vega in the province of Pinar del Río, had run away after delivering a series of blows, punches, and kicks to another slave named Antonio. Antonio labored for Don Diego Vento on an adjacent estate. At the heart of the conflict was José's jealousy over the relationship between Antonio and a free black woman named Francisca.[597] According to this record, José not only had the ability to escape the confines of his vega, but was also mobile enough to initiate a relationship with Francisca. He was even mobile enough to travel to another vega, search for and locate another slave, and inflict a series of blows on this slave before running away and finally being captured. In addition to Jose's considerable mobility, Antonio's relationship with a non-slave who must have resided outside of Don Vento's vega also demonstrates inter-plantation connections and freedom of movement both into and out of this particular vega by multiple people.

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595 Byron Andrews, *The Story of Cuba* (Washington: National Tribune, 1896).
596 Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 150.
597 "Expediente sobre diligencias formadas contra el negro José Córdova que fue aprendido por sospechoso," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 235, exp. 1431, 1842.

If the labor regime of tobacco cultivation facilitated slave mobility by requiring slave movement from field to field and from field to home the structure of the bohío also directly influenced slave mobility. Stand-alone housing structures that lacked the security measures of the barracón enabled slaves to create their own independent rhythms and patterns of life. These unsupervised living quarters also allowed a different kind of autonomous action: suicide. Miguel is an example of a slave who took advantage of these conditions as he was found hanged in his bohío on a vega in Pinar del Río in 1847 – an act the official record listed as suicide.[598] While slave suicide occurred in a variety of places and under a diverse array of labor regimes throughout Cuba, in Miguel's case, his action was directly related to the degree of autonomy inherent to a structure distinctive to tobacco cultivation. Traditionally, suicide has been understood as a form of resistance. Manuel Barcia argues that this phenomenon – dating back to African origins and traditions as a "way out for the humiliated, the disgraced" – was, for slaves, a "viable way to escape" bondage. And from the perspectives of planters and the state, suicide was also as an act of resistance that deprived planters of a valuable resource.[599] In relation to understanding the how tobacco cultivation impacted the material world of slaves on vegas the role of housing structures in either permitting or prohibiting slave suicide is privileged, rather than the properties of resistance that his action also held. As a result, suicide is seen a demonstration of independent activity enabled by autonomous spaces and just as housing structures enhanced slaves' mobility, they also enabled slaves' ability to act on their own—in this case, in an extreme form of self-determination.

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[598] "Diligencias formadas por el suicidio del negro esclavo de la propiedad de Isidoro Prieto,"AHPPR, IJC, leg. 225, exp.1372, 1847-1850.
[599] Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*, 71, 83.

Another example of unconstrained movement and private space providing for freedom of action is the case of the slave Pedro Carabalí. In the province of Pinar del Río and in 1845, Pedro was found hanged, *ahorcado*, in his bohío; the cause was initially unknown.[600] A considerable investigation in the partido of Mariel ensued, beginning with an interrogation of the slave's mayoral and the contra-mayoral, a 30-year-old slave named Jose, of the Lucumi nation. Two slaves of the same dotación also appear in the record: Pedro Luisino, of the Congo nation, single, and 31 years of age; and Patricio, also of the Congo nation, single, age 30. According to official records, each individual was asked if he knew the cause or motive of Pedro's death, and all respondents replied no. Officials next asked if Pedro was sick and if he had recently been punished by the mayoral or other persons for some fault. All respondents also replied no to these questions. Next, they were asked if Pedro and other slaves on the farm were fed enough and had sufficient clothes. One respondent stated that they were fed twice daily and annually given a new supply of clothes, a statement affirmed by Luisino. Unable to attribute Pedro's passing to maltreatment, officials eventually listed the cause of his death as suicide. It is impossible to understand the rationale behind Pedro's action. However, taken at face value, the testimonies of numerous individuals on this estate eliminate one of the primary motives for this act: abusive and intolerable living and laboring conditions.[601] What is unmistakable is where the hanging occurred: Pedro's bohío, an independent and ungoverned private housing unit that afforded Pedro the time and means to effectively carry out this act. In interpreting the full dimensions of slave suicide the

[600] "Expediente sobre diligencias formados por haberse encontrado ahorcado el negro Pedro de la dotación propiedad de Jose Joaquin de Peñalven," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 111, exp. 536. 1845.
[601] For examples of extreme conditions on Cuban plantations causing slave suicides, see García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 160–163.

specific space in which these actions occur remains a critical component in understanding this important action.

In addition to taking advantage of their living quarters to engage in unrestricted activity, including suicide, other tobacco-based slaves in Pinar del Río used the mobility granted by the labor requirements of this agricultural economy as a primary means of independence. For example, a slave named Marcelino was found hanged on the outside margins of the vega "*El Conuco*" in 1846.[602] According to officials Marcelino's whereabouts had been unaccounted for since the previous day of when he found. And although the court records do not distinguish if this was slave suicide or murder, the case does reveal that Marcelino possessed enough independence to leave his bohío and travel, unsupervised, across the periphery of the tobacco estate. For Marcelino, his freedom of movement was not inhibited by a secured housing structure like a barracón but rather enabled by a specific housing structure that permitted a relatively large degree of mobility and freedom. Four years later, another investigation involving the suicide of a slave took place on a vega in a partido of San Juan y Martínez. Like Marcelino, Estaban Chambá, a slave of Don Antonio Mora's, was found hanged on the perimeter of the estate, although in Estaban's case, the suicide occurred in a *casa de tabaco*, or drying shed. The official proceedings to determine the cause of death resemble the investigation into Pedro's death: court records describe several interviews related to the health, treatment, quality of food, and clothing for slaves on this estate. However, while in Pedro's example the motive for his suicide was considered indeterminable, in this case, the focus of inquiry revolved around Don Mora, probably because Mora had punished

602 "Diligencias formadas por el suicidio de un negro esclavo de la propiedad de Don Antonio de Leon," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 225, exp. 1368, 1846.

Estaban with 25 lashes the day before his death.[603] Estaban's treatment was a critical aspect of his enslavement, but so too was his ability to undertake a private act, aided by free movement allowed by an independent and ungoverned housing structure.[604]

Although the occurrence of slave suicide has been used to explore how tobacco cultivation structured the parameters of the material world of this slave community, specifically as autonomous actions facilitated by their unique housing structures, slaves in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century did use their mobility and independent housing to produce more overt forms of resistance. When the ability of slaves to move freely was threatened, slave housing arrangements and ungoverned movement could become tools for resistance. An account by Manuela Barcia vividly illustrates the importance that slaves attached to their living arrangements and the meanings or implications behind the physical structure of certain spaces. Barcia describes two slaves, Pedro Gangá and Jacobo Gangá, who in 1844 planned to kill the manager of their estate because their freedom of mobility during the night had been restricted; they were newly confined and locked in barracks.[605] Although these slaves were not successful, their plan illustrates their desire to resist control over housing arrangements and the mobility enabled by those housing layouts. Similarly, the nineteenth-century traveler John Taylor wrote about a recalcitrant slave, who in response to being punished by one of Taylor's associates, set upon her master in the middle of the night and, in an attempt to kill him,

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[603] "Expediente sobre el Suicidio del negro Estaban Chambá esclavo de Don Antonio Mora," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 225, exp. 1377, 1850.

[604] This is not to say that slaves laboring under a variety of different regimes were not capable of taking advantage of any opportunity available to commit suicide, including slaves on sugar plantations. Rather, that slaves on tobacco estates using bohíos as the primary slave housing units were afforded increased opportunity and means not available to slaves locked in a barracón.

[605] Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*, 32.

set fire to his house and property. In return, the master "disposed of her to a sugar estate where she would hardly have a chance to play such pranks."[606]

In terms of contesting the material conditions of their enslavement, plantation architecture mattered for slaves. Because of the "dialectal relationship between slaveowners' control of plantation space and enslaved laborers' resistance of that control," spaces of freedom and opportunities to enact that freedom were very much a reflection of specific estate arrangements.[607] This chapter's examination of resistance concerns the spaces that housing structures afforded and the opportunities for mobility that facilitated acts of resistance. As a result, although there is a large and dynamic literature devoted to exploring the origins and implications of Cuban slave resistance, and in particular, large-scale rebellions, this chapter does not assign particular meanings to acts of slave resistance.[608] Instead, my analysis focuses on the ways that resistance among Cuban tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century was a product of specific housing quarters and opportunities for mobility.

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606 John Glanville Taylor, *The United States and Cuba: Eight Years of Change and Travel* (London: R. Bentley, 1851), 231.

607 Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations." Singleton is at the forefront of both American and Cuban slave archaeology. For a broad overview, see Singleton and Bograd, *The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas*; Theresa A Singleton, *"I, Too, Am America" Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, ed. NetLibrary, Inc (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999). For other Cuban works pertaining to slave archaeology, see Domínguez, "Fuentes Arqueológicas En El Estudio de La Esclavitud En Cuba"; Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba: Resistance and Repression*, Envisioning Cuba (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Gabino La Rosa Corzo, "The Archaeology of Escaped Slaves," in *Beyond the Blockade: New Currents in Cuban Archaeology* (University Alabama Press, 2010), 126–142.

608 For three of the best works on Cuban slave resistance and rebellion, see Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood*; Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*. For a burgeoning literature that examines slave resistance through extensive communication networks, both inter-plantation and urban and rural, see Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery*; Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery"; Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads"; Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844."

Housing and the physical environment played a pivotal role in either facilitating or inhibiting slave resistance. On ingenios, the barracón "changed the dynamics of slave existence" by ensuring "less flexibility and maneuverability" than slaves had previously possessed.[609] By contrast, vegas, with their independent slave huts, reduced labor requirements, and movement restrictions, intrinsically enabled illicit activity. In 1843, the estate owner Carlos Ghersi described the impact that distance between the domiciles of slaves and master had upon opportunities for unsupervised activity. For Ghersi, "the latter are usually far away from the slaves' huts, and thus they make use of the hours of natural rest to run away: they establish communication with other estates, choosing as a meeting point that farm in which the white employees are less vigilant, and from those gatherings and communications are born all the disorders, thefts, and everything else to be feared."[610]

Examples of this type of illicit activity among slaves in Pinar del Río include the Cuban-born slave Sebastián, who was implicated in the burning of his master's casa de tabaco. The authorities determined that Sebastián had not been trying to murder his master, Don Raymundo Ferrer. But the classification of Sebastián's act as arson, according to the judicial proceedings into this case, marks this action as a clear display of slave resistance on a Cuban vega.[611] As a second example, the case of Jose Maria illustrates the interrelation between mobility, housing and resistance. Jose Maria, a slave claimed by the veguero Don Joaquin Guzmann, fled his master and sought refuge with the free black Rafael Carabalí in 1835.[612] Jose Maria was eventually discovered - Rafael

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609 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 235–236.
610 As quoted in, Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*, 107.
611 "Expediente sobre autos criminales contra el negro Sebastián" AHPPR, IJC, leg. 271, exp. 1596, 1843.
612 "Expediente contra el negro libre [ ] Carabali" AHPPR, IJC, leg, 12, exp. 43, 1835. For a suspicious fire that destroyed a quantity of tobacco of another planter, "Expediente criminal en averiguacion de […] al

was found to have hidden Jose in his bohío and to have lent him a pistol, for which Rafael was sentenced to jail.[613] In the same area of the Vuelta Abajo, another runaway slave demonstrates the extent to which slave mobility was linked to freedom. In 1827 in the pueblo of Pinar del Río, José, a 14-year-old Cuban-born slave, had run away from his master, Don José Quintona, and sought refuge with another local planter, Don Francisco Diaz. This attempt at exchanging masters proved to be successful for José: his original master was resigned to seek compensation, 400 pesos, from Francisco Diaz rather than having José forcibly returned and risking further attempts at running away from Don Quintona's estate.[614] Twenty years later, in 1855, two slaves were not as lucky. These slaves had escaped and hidden on a vega in Pinar del Río, only to be captured a short time later.[615] Although this latter case demonstrates the limitations facing all Cuban slaves, specifically the threat of being recaptured and returned, their example and that of José's also attest to the incomplete physical constraints of the tobacco estate.

The structure of the bohío also provided for another form of resistance: theft. Because of the lack of visual oversight and rudimentary structure, the bohío was also a site of covert resistance. Slaves manipulated their dwellings to reflect their own needs,

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incendia orurrido en la casa […] de Don Rojas," Archivo Nacional de Cuba (hereafter ANC) Miscelánea de Expedientes (hereafter ME) 649/Ag, 1868. And, "Expediente criminal por el incendio de una casa de tabaco," ANC, ME 758/F, 758/I, 1866. For similar occurrence, only for a free black planter, see "Expediente criminal instruido para averiguacion de las causas que produjeron el incendio de la casa de tabaco,",ANC, ME, 652/U, 1868.

[613] Egor Sivers, the Russian nineteenth century observer of Cuban slavery, contended that if a free person was found to have hidden a fugitive slave, the offender would be sentenced to a jail term of two months for the first occurrence, three for a second, and double that for a third offense. As cited in, Borís Lukín, "Viajes Poco Conocidos de Rusia a Cuba a Mediados del Siglo XIX," in *Los vínculos ruso-cubanos, soviético-cubanos, siglos XVIII-XX*, ed. Academia de Ciencias de la USSR and Academia de Ciencias de Cuba (Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989), 64.

[614] "Expediente promovido por Don José Quintona contra Don Francisco Diaz" AHPPR, IJC, leg. 218, exp.1281, 1827-1829.

[615] "Diligencias formadas por Nicolase sobre la fuga de esclavos," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 811, exp. 5372, 1855.

and many dug pits underneath their bohíos to store illicit goods, an activity that could not occur under the more solidly built barracones.[616] Several nineteenth-century accounts reference the extensive nature of slaves' illicitly obtained goods. Taylor describes slaves who, in the middle of the night, dug under a master's floor to steal two hundred pounds of tobacco. This quantity was so large that the slaves would have had to try to exchange the tobacco for other, smaller items. These other items, as goods generated by the theft of tobacco, most likely would have to be kept hidden from oversight in a secure and independent place, such as a bohío.[617] Writing in the nineteenth century Anselmo points to the "extremely frequent thefts" that occurred inside the slave bohíos. This problem was of such magnitude that the slaves and the overseer were "almost never able to prevent" such thefts, even with "the most exquisite vigilance."[618] Bohíos lacked security measures such as the central lock on a barracón and solid flooring and walls. This lack was certainly a disadvantage in that slaves were unable to secure bot their legal and illegally obtained goods. But these "extremely frequent thefts" nevertheless testify to the degree of movement surrounding these structures.[619]

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[616] Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations," 108; Singleton and Bograd, *The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas*, 19.

[617] Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 232.

[618] Romero, *Coleccion de articulos de Anselmo Suárez y Romero*, 203.

[619] In addition to slave theft it is worth noting that robberies on vegas of both tobacco and personal property were prevalent and could include a variety of suspects from all classes which suggests considerable opportunity of movement into and out of the plantation for the illegal acquisition of valuable goods from rural estates. This was especially true for vegas as tobacco had a long history in Cuba as a smuggled commodity, due in large part to its ease of transportation and the high profit attached to the crop. As an example Don Muñez lists the stolen goods from the robbery of his vega in San Cristóbal including, a sizable quantity of tobacco as well as other material goods such as a metal cot and bedding, with the investigation centering around the free black Santiago Herrera who became the principal suspect due to his access to Don Muñez's property. "Expediente sobre autos de hurto de Don Silvestre Muñez por robo en su vega," AHPPR, IJC, leg, 1129, exp. 6777, 1853. Even more telling is the criminal case filed by Don Gonález where there were no suspects in the theft of tobacco from his vega in Los Palacios, Pinar del Río, the lack of which suggests considerable opportunity for individuals throughout this region to successfully procure and trade in tobacco through illicit channels. "Expediente sobre autos criminales promovido por Don Francisco Gonález por el hurto [ ] de tabaco," AHPPR, IJC, leg, 1129, exp. 6778, 1875.

On Cuban vegas, the potential for spatially-derived autonomy and acts of resistance extended beyond the bohío to include the estate's perimeter and the area just outside this perimeter, known as the *lindero*. Slaves housed in bohíos, those with access, and those with the freedom to move at night commonly took advantage of this physical space and its obscurity to perform personal or unsanctioned activity, especially with slaves on neighboring farms.[620] One example demonstrates the range and degree of mobility for Cuban tobacco slaves in this region during the nineteenth century. In 1837, Don Antonio Vera, resident of the pueblo of Pinar del Río, delivered the "negro Manuel" to his owner, Alejandro Diaz. Vera's slave the "mulato Manuel" had disappeared more than a year and a half previously, and Vera suspected that Manuel knew what had happened to Vera's slave.[621] According to an official investigation in late August 1835, Vera's slave, Manuel, had fled from Vera's tobacco estate in the middle of the night. This action was deemed suspicious as Manuel had no history of running away, and furthermore, he left nearly all of his possessions behind, including his shoes. In that same year, the veguero Don José Herrera had sold his slave, also named Manuel, to Don Diaz for fifteen ounces of gold (roughly equivalent to 250 pesos). Although there are gaps in the historical record, it is possible to piece together the ensuing timeline from the disappearance of the "mulato Manuel" and the discovery of the "negro Manuel." According to several individuals, the mulato slave Manuel, after Vera had notified authorities of his fleeing, had been seen on various roads outside and around the city of

620 Finch locates the importance of this space in terms of autonomy as well, arguing "these unclaimed spaces that lay between, and at the borders of the individual estates, formed part of an alternative landscape for enslaved women and men who sought out momentary reprieve from the slave regime. Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 65.

621 "Diligencias formadas por consecuencias de haber [ ] el negro Manuel esclavo de Don José Herrera [ ] un mulato nombrado Manuel de la propiedad de Don Antonio Vera fue muerto [ ]," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 233, exp. 1411, 1838.

Pinar del Río. Some people also testified that they had spoken with him. Two of these individuals were the criollo slave Miguel, owned by Don Domingo Diaz; and another slave, Beltran, single, native of Caracas, and owned by Alejandro Diaz. Miguel and Beltran testified that they had on separate occasions had either heard or seen the mulato slave Manuel as being as far away as the vicinity of Havana.

However, the "negro Manuel," Alejandro Diaz's slave, subsequently gave a confession regarding the missing slave, testifying that the missing Manuel was most likely dead. Officials then centered their investigation on the robbery and death of Vera's slave, rather than on his fleeing. Officials questioned the "negro Manuel" about the other Manuel's disappearance and suspected that he had been involved in the crime. They asked what day and time Vera's slave had been killed, the instrument used, and the motive. However, Manuel only answered that he knew that the other slave had been killed and where he was buried, but not by whom or why. Manuel knew this information based on a secret he shared with another slave, Francisco, who gave him these details. A companion of the dead slave Manuel, Francisco had originally been suspected in Manuel's disappearance, but had died in jail during the proceedings before his confession could be extracted. Yet, with the testimony of Diaz's slave, the investigation was able to center on locating the body. Manuel claimed that he knew that the body was on the vega of his former owner, Don Herrera, because he had seen it only six months previously.

Officials believed that this slave Manuel had betrayed his confidence with Francisco; they assumed that Francisco had told Manuel about killing and burying Vera's slave. They next attempted to determine where the dead Manuel was located. The officials visited Herrera's estate to seek his cooperation with their investigation. Immediately after the officials spoke with Herrera, the slave Manuel arrived. Don Herrera

then instructed this slave to take them below to the particular vega that Manuel had been assigned to work on so that they could find the body of the missing slave. Manuel pointed out where the body should be on the basis of having seen fresh blood on this particular spot some time ago. After forcing Manuel to dig up the soil, officials discovered the cadaver of the slave Manuel. The officials told two of Herrera's other slaves, Jose and Camilo, to guard the body for further investigation.

Although the court record fails to provide a resolution for this case, it is likely that with Francisco's death and Manuel's help, the proceedings were effectively closed. Yet, this remarkable case reveals a discernible and even widespread degree of mobility and autonomy among Pinar del Río's tobacco slaves. The dead slave Manuel disappeared in the middle of the night and then traveled around Pinar del Río and potentially as far as Havana (approximately 100 miles).[622] These facts signal considerable latitude in both the opportunity and ability to freely move about the region. Moreover, other slaves testified to seeing Manuel outside his vega, which suggests that they were also away from their farms.

Yet it is the testimony of Manuel and the actions of Francisco that shed the most light on slave mobility in Pinar del Río. Herrera had described Manuel—the slave of Alejandro Diaz—as having run away "many times." This suggests multiple and repeated opportunities for slaves to maneuver according to their own needs and desires. Additionally, the space and time for slave mobility was sufficient enough to allow, allegedly, a rogue slave, Francisco, access to a vega where he did not belong in order to presumably kill and bury another slave.

[622] Because of the vast distance between Pinar del Río and Havana, it is more than likely that the testimony of seeing Manuel near Havana was a means to disguise his murder.

It is clear that slaves in this tobacco area had considerable freedom of movement. And it was this degree of mobility that allowed for a similarly expansive autonomy. Whether it was the independence of possessing goods in a separate bohío, numerous attempts at escaping slavery by fleeing, opportunities for secretive communication, access to remote areas in the darkness of night, or the ability to determine intra-slave relations across a spectrum that included the possibility of murder, slaves on and around vegas used their enhanced mobility and general lack of supervision to exert their own free will in a variety of significant ways.[623]

CONCLUSION

This chapter addresses vega dotación demography, housing, and mobility. The lives of Cuban tobacco slaves were largely defined by the spaces of autonomy that their labor afforded them. The degree of their autonomy is most apparent in contrast with another plantation economy on the island, sugar. The contemporary traveler Robert Baird describes the limitations placed on slaves on ingenios. Baird remarks on this population's limited creolization, saying that "it is quite notorious that the slave population of Cuba is almost entirely supported by importation of slaves from the coast of Africa."[624] Furthermore, Baird says that the life expectancy of sugar slaves does not surpass eight years from the time they arrive.[625] Baird also claims that "in some estates there are no women –in others there are very few; and the men are, during the hours devoted to sleep, penned up in the barracoons [sic] like so many cattle."[626] For Baird, this environment

[623] For an instance of other slaves entering, another slave owner's vega, unsupervised and at night, see "Expediente formado por Don Manuel García contra Don Antonio y los negros Pedro José Lucumí y [ ] criolla," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 240, exp. 1449, 1845.
[624] Baird, *Impressions and Experiences of the West Indies and North America in 1849*, 1:201.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid., 1:225.

placed severe restrictions on how slaves constructed their lives; he noted that he never even heard "of any estate on which a number of labourers was kept up by births on the estate itself. Indeed, the idea of making the slave population supply itself is the last thing that seems to enter a Cuban's mind." Baird additionally maintains that the Cuban planter "can buy *much* cheaper than he can breed," an opinion echoed by numerous other contemporary writers.[627] Referencing the short lifespan and the low rate of domestic births among the enslaved population of Cuba, stemming from the low percentage of women and the general mistreatment of slaves, Baird concludes, "as to the condition and treatment of agricultural slaves in the island of Cuba, these two well-ascertained facts speak volumes, and render further inquiry almost unnecessary."[628]

However, the two pillars of slavery that generate Baird's condemnation of the institution in Cuba - life expectancy and family formation – were different for slaves involved in tobacco cultivation. Tobacco's reduced labor requirements, more balanced gender ratio, and higher-than-average percentage of young and old laborers made for a unique life experience. Because tobacco's labor routines remained consistent over the course of cultivation, and because its labor requirements permitted a wide range of laborers, tobacco slavery produced distinct demographic patterns defined by an enhanced life expectancy and an exceptional proportion of female and young slaves. This demographic foundation enabled family formation for these slaves. As Van Norman notes, "the single most important aspect of the demographic difference or closer gender parity…was the construction of family units."[629] For Cuban tobacco slaves in Pinar del Río in the nineteenth century, more women meant more children, which meant a viable

[627] Ibid. Italics in the original.
[628] Ibid., 1:226.
[629] Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 138.

familial community. Moreover, the demography of tobacco-based slave labor, within the context of abolition, affected this community in critically important ways: comparatively higher percentages of young and elderly slaves were freed under the Moret Law.

The formation of families necessitated a specific housing arrangement, the bohío, an independent structure that created unique spaces of autonomy for this community. In these stand-alone dwellings, slaves developed and determined personal and communal relations by controlling internal spatial arrangements according to their own needs and without oversight. These dwelling also allowed them a modicum of mobility that further augmented their independence. From these dwellings, tobacco slaves gained control over time and movement, with these freedoms fundamentally altering the constraints of enslavement. Operating from autonomous spaces, these slaves were bound by neither locked plantation housing nor secured perimeters. As a result, they were able to initiate inter-plantation relationships and enact expressions of freedom or self-determination in the form of suicides. They were also able to commit more overt acts of resistance, including arson, running away, and theft of goods. The conditions of life for tobacco slaves in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century provide a new context for understanding Cuban slavery. They also provide a point of contrast to the execrable condition of Cuban slavery on sugar fields.

Chapter 5: Slavery, Freedom, and the Internal Economy of the Vega and Coartación

Cuban plantation owner Jose Montalvo y Castillo, in an address on the basic necessities for slaves to retain any semblance of humanity, cites the independent activity afforded to the slave by his "animals and conucos," which "are the soul of his existence."[630]

A nineteenth-century traveler to Cuba wrote of an old blind slave who complained about another slave, "Anacleto," who was robbing him of chickens that the older slave had raised in the hope of selling them to his master. The old slave spoke of "that property as his own life."[631]

INTRODUCTION

Writing during the middle of the nineteenth century, John Taylor, an English traveler who was also a slaveholder during his six years of residency in Cuba, observed that "a slave who had no spare time except feast days and working days, after his task was over, earn no less a sum, in six months only, than eighty-five dollars, by one crop of tobacco."[632] Taylor knew this because he was the one who had purchased the slave's tobacco crop. In this brief account, Taylor described an internal economy among slaves in the tobacco fields of Cuba. In this internal or informal economy, slaves not only engaged in subsistence cultivation on individual and communal provision plots but also marketed surplus production. This independent production of the slave community is critical in determining where and how spaces of autonomy developed in certain slave regimes. In the context of Cuba, the most important expression of slave autonomy generated by an internal economy was the pathway to freedom permitted by the

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630 Gloria García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 1. ed. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2003), 35.
631 Demoticus Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes* (New-York: D. Appleton & Co, 1856), 155.
632 John Glanville Taylor, *The United States and Cuba: Eight Years of Change and Travel* (London: R. Bentley, 1851), 207.

acquisition of material resources. The most conspicuous form of this pathway to freedom was the institution of *coartación*, or self-purchase.

As an example, in 1859 in the town of Candelaria, Pinar del Río, the slaves Cristobal and Teresa Carabali filed criminal charges in the theft of their property. In the proceedings, the slaves outlined numerous belongings that had been stolen out of their bohío, including a variety of clothes, nine ounces of gold (roughly equivalent to 150 pesos), and three doubloons. Cristobal and Teresa had secured the money along with other items in a "*baúl"*—a trunk or storage unit—inside their bohío. In his testimony, Cristobal claimed that the thieves had also stolen a paper documenting Teresa's entry into the legally recognized process of self-purchase. Teresa had initiated self-purchase with a down payment of 250 pesos. Once commenced, the self-purchase process would transform her from a slave with limited rights to a *coartado*, a person with enhanced freedom, including the right to labor on her own account. As an explanation for how they had acquired this sum the two slaves testified that they had earned the money by selling pigs and roosters – primary components of the informal economy.[633]

This chapter explores the internal economy among slaves on Cuban vegas. To explain the existence of the informal economy, the chapter offers a structural argument centered on tobacco and tobacco-based slavery. The specific nature of tobacco cultivation provided the foundation of an internal economy: its labor requirements and routines necessitated comparatively less effort and time from enslaved laborers; its economic position within Cuba's plantation economy allowed for internal subsistence production alongside tobacco on individual vegas; and tobacco's character as an easily produced and

633 "Expediente sobre autos criminales promovido por los esclavos Carabalies Cristobal y Teresa," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 1045, exp. 6422, 1859.

marketed cash crop made it an essential component of the slaves' economy. In addition to the influence of this specific labor regime, the particular features of tobacco slavery also enabled a vega-based internal economy. Distinct slave housing structures facilitated the presence of provision plots, known as conucos, surrounding individual bohíos; they also enabled slaves to possess and maintain their own material goods. In addition, tobacco slaves' increased mobility gave them access to larger subsistence plots that they cultivated for their own use. Finally, demographic patterns created a diverse slave community and allowed family units to divide labor tasks as means of increasing private production of goods.

This chapter will also show how the internal economy created new roles for slaves as economic actors. I argue that the nature of slavery was fundamentally transformed by tobacco slaves' ability to independently produce, market, and consume their own goods. In essence, slaves were human chattel - objects to be used and commodities to be bought and sold. However, slaves continuously pushed against these characteristics of their condition, and one of the ways they did so was by actively participating in an internal economy. When slaves could command their own time and labor, they grew produce for subsistence and made surplus products outside the labor requirements of their masters; they also bartered, sold, exchanged, acquired, and even stole marketable goods. In these ways, slaves created a new role for themselves as economic actors. As producers, marketers, and consumers, slaves defied the traditional arrangements of power and position in slave societies. These new identities and these new activities significantly altered the "essential" narrative of enslavement. For many slaves, participating in this economy guaranteed a measure of self-determination that was far removed from their imposed identity as enslaved laborers. The internal economy

ensured that slaves' first experience in the market economy - as objects to be sold, used, and sold again – was not their only experience.

From the demands of tobacco cultivation that structured the development of an informal economy for slaves in Pinar del Río, the ability of slaves in this community to accumulate resources fundamentally altered the very nature of their existence. For slaves with access to ownership of material goods, a legally recognized process of self-purchase, coartación, granted them the opportunity to secure their own freedom. It was not easy for slaves to initiate this process, and it was especially difficult for rural slaves, whose mobility and time were more limited than they were for slaves in urban areas. However, rural slaves with conucos and the capacity to manufacture, acquire, and market goods could and did initiate the process of coartación. In Pinar del Río, coartación was directly linked to the intrinsic nature of tobacco cultivation. Tobacco's small scale, low overhead, ease of production, and high profit margins enabled slaves to independently cultivate tobacco as their own cash crop. In addition, tobacco's cultivation requirements and labor structure gave slaves time and opportunity to hire themselves out in exchange for money. Because of these features of tobacco slavery, slaves in Pinar del Río had access to valuable resources that not only fundamentally altered their daily existence but also were used to forever change their imposed condition of servitude by securing their own freedom through coartación.

INTERNAL ECONOMY

According to Ira Berlin and Phillip Morgan, "most elementally, the work of slaves can be divided into that done for the master and that for the slave." Berlin and Morgan further contend that within the institution of slavery, there were "two interrelated and

overlapping economies: one organized by and for masters; the other by and for slaves."[634] Although slavery as an economy was predicated upon the coercion of labor, it is impossible to overstate the importance of the informal economy to the material conditions of those enslaved. As one of the first scholars to analyze the internal economy of slaves, Sydney Mintz emphasizes the essential value of this activity, arguing that slaves "gained access to the use of productive property, produced thereby quantities of goods that they could consume and also exchange and sell, used their earnings autonomously, and in these ways achieved at least some distance from the conventional meanings usually conveyed by their defined status."[635] That this was happening within the constraints of slavery means that enslaved individuals were using independent production to push the boundaries and limitations of their enslavement. To fully understand the institution of slavery, therefore, it is imperative to understand this critical component of slave life.

By its very nature, the internal economy originating out of the slave community is hard to quantify. Large sets of data are rare, and the historical examples that do exist are fragmentary and perhaps not indicative of larger customs and practices. For the most part, this has kept historians from examining what is one of the most critical expressions of slave autonomy. However, beginning in the 1980s, historians have paid increasing attention to this subject, which has resulted in a widespread acknowledgement of the

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[634] Ira Berlin and Philip D Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, England: Frank Cass, 1991), 1.

[635] Sidney W. Mintz, "Slavery and the Rise of Peasantries," *Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 6:1 (Summer/ét 1979): 219. See also, Douglas Hall and Sidney W. Mintz, *The Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System* (Department of Anthropology, Yale University, 1960); Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (New Brunswick [N.J.]: Aldine Transaction, 2007); Sidney W. Mintz, *From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C: Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1984).

existence and importance of the internal economies that occurred in slave societies throughout the western hemisphere.[636] Yet, the internal economy of slaves in Cuba has received considerably less attention than the internal economies in other areas of the Caribbean, the Atlantic, and the United States. It is possible that the awareness of slaves as producers, consumers and marketers in these regions is more prolific than in Cuba because of the legal and social institutionalization of these practices in those areas. Yet, it

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[636] For overviews of this literature, see Berlin and Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy*; Mary Turner, ed., *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (Kingston - Bloomington: Ian Randle Publishers - Indiana University Press, 1995); Douglas Egerton, "Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, no. 4 (2006): 617–639. For Brazil, see Ciro Flamarion S. Cardoso, "The Peasant Breach in the Slave System: New Developments in Brazil," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 25, no. 1 (July 1, 1988): 49–57; Laird W. Bergad, *Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1720-1888* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kathleen Higgins, *"Licentious Liberty" in a Brazilian Gold-mining Region : Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-century Sabará, Minas Gerais* (University Park Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); B. J. Barickman, "'A Bit of Land, Which They Call Roça': Slave Provision Grounds in the Bahian Recôncavo, 1780-1860," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 74, no. 4 (November 1, 1994): 649–687; B. J. Barickman, "Persistence and Decline: Slave Labour and Sugar Production in the Bahian Reconcavo, 1850-1888," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3 (October 1, 1996): 581–633; B. J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint : Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780-1860* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998). For the British Caribbean, see B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). For the United States, see Clement Eaton, "Slave-Hiring in the Upper South: A Step Toward Freedom," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46, no. 4 (1960): 663; Philip D. Morgan, "Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700 to 1880," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 4, Third Series (October 1, 1982): 564–599; Philip D. Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 3 (1983): 399–420; John Campbell, "The Gender Division of Labor, Slave Reproduction, and the Slave Family Economy on Southern Cotton Plantations, 1800-1865" (Michigan, 1988); Lawrence McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community," in *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society*, ed. Winfred B Moore, Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 31–44; Michael Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, Blacks in the New World (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Roderick McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Larry Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Dylan Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

is important to examine the internal economy wherever it exists and in whatever form it takes, because it so fundamentally altered the nature of the slave experience. By creating a role for themselves as independent economic actors, slaves enacted a degree of independence that contradicted the very nature of their enslavement.

In the agrarian and slave-based plantation economy of Cuba, the internal economy of slaves centered on the independent cultivation of provision plots, or conucos, and was most pronounced in the tobacco fields of Pinar del Río. Provision plots allowed this slave community to challenge the conditions of their enslavement: independent production could lead to improvements in diet, access to material goods, and even the mitigation of labor requirements.[637] In addition to helping slaves reconfigure the nature of enslavement, the internal economy ultimately facilitated pathways to freedom, especially in the context of Cuban tobacco slavery.

Cuba's internal economy is recognized within the historical literature, but it is so understudied that it represents a large lacuna in the study and understanding of Cuban slavery in the nineteenth century. As Aisha Finch argues, "images of rural Cuban slaves as laborers oppressed by capitalist markets are abundant; depictions of those slaves as earners, consumers, and participants in that market are exceptional."[638] Echoing this sentiment, Van Norman claims that "direct testimony of slaves toiling in their provision grounds" during the nineteenth century is "limited."[639] The importance of the internal economy is mentioned throughout the historiography, yet its importance is belied by the

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[637] Higman contends that it "was a general rule that the slaves were granted more 'free' days where they were required under the provision ground system to produce their own food, and fewer where the masters distributed regular allowances." Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 180.
[638] Aisha Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads: Cuban Slaves and the Conspiracy of La Escalera, 1841--1844" (Ph.D., History, New York University, 2007), 286.
[639] William C. Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790--1845" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), 193.

negligible attention it has received. This is principally a reflection of the literature's larger emphasis upon sugar slavery and the understanding that sugar production in the nineteenth century prohibited an independent economy. Subsistence and independent production by slaves required time and land. But in the Cuban sugar mill, every measure was designed to maximize profit, and this meant that all land was devoted to sugar cane and slaves' time was completely taken up by their required labor. The specific conditions of sugar have influenced the way historians have understood Cuba's internal economy. Moreno Fraginals, for example, argues that Cuban slaves were "lacking" any "concept of personal economy."[640]

In two of the more comprehensive analyses of Cuban slavery and sugar, Rebecca Scott and Laird Bergad agree that for the most part that the economics of sugar production prevented personal production by slaves, but also argue that an informal economy did sometimes exist on ingenios. According to Scott, sugar plantations were bound by "the exigencies of technology and profitability [that] tended to turn the semimechanized, capitalistic, export-oriented sugar plantations of the mid-nineteenth century into a prison, the slaves into mere factors of production."[641] However, Scott notes several remarkable exceptions of plantations that did feature an internal economy. In the same fashion, Bergad in his study of sugar slavery argues that "the degradation of slavery and the extreme physical and psychological brutality that was part and parcel of daily life for most slaves should be stressed." However, Bergad also maintains that "for some

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[640] Manuel Moreno Fraginals, ed., *Africa in Latin America: Essays on History, Culture, And Socialization* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984), 13.
[641] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, New pbk. ed. (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 14.

slaves there were apparently mitigating factors"—most significantly, the presence of an internal economy.[642]

For Scott, the possibility of independent production by sugar slaves rests on "the circumstances under which …slaves did obtain access to land and were able to produce crops."[643] According to Scott, these circumstances were determined by planter prerogative as some estate owners "revived and encouraged" the use of provision plots when it was "convenient."[644] Although this is an important modification of Moreno Fraginals' understanding, Scott's assessment still reaffirms the limited scope of independent production on Cuban ingenios. Bergad qualifies this practice chronologically, noting slaves' use of provision grounds was "fairly extensive" at the beginning of the nineteenth century on specific types of land: notably, areas that were "part of a frontier zone where land was plentiful and marginally exploited" - although this would dissipate as Cuba's sugar revolution evolved.[645] Similar to Scott, Bergad's isolation of slave provision plots to exceptional land and to an exclusive period, further suggests that independent economic activity was not the rule on Cuban ingenios.

Tobacco Labor

Structural conditions on Cuban ingenios severely limited the availability and use of provision plots by slaves, except for certain planters, on certain plantations, and in certain areas. But this was not the case for tens of thousands of slaves laboring outside of these plantations. The structure of tobacco's labor regime in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century enabled independent production by those enslaved on vegas in this

642 Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990), 80.
643 Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 16.
644 Ibid., 15.
645 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 79.

area. On the role of crop specificity and independent production by slaves, Berlin and Morgan maintain that "in every slave society, understanding the slaves' economy requires understanding the masters' economy: the nature of the labor force, the requirements of particular crops, the organization of production and its seasonal rhythms."[646] In the context of tobacco production in Pinar del Río, the impact of tobacco's labor requirements upon the material conditions of enslavement extends into this critical feature of slave life - independent production. The work requirements and labor needs of tobacco production in Pinar del Río were embedded in the exigencies of the crop itself. Crop specificity was the catalyst for the "emergence of characteristic patterns of material conditions" for the tobacco slave community in this area.[647] This chapter explores how unique characteristics of labor, demography, and land all structured the development of slave-based subsistence production in the Cuba's primary tobacco growing region, the Vuelta Abajo.[648]

The presence of provision plots depended on how labor was organized and the degree to which labor requirements left slaves with the hours and energy necessary to cultivate their own plots. Typically, slaves were organized either by a gang system, in which slaves worked in teams that together performed a variety of jobs, or by a task system, in which slaves worked alone or in tandem with other slaves to accomplish specified tasks. These organizational systems exerted a significant influence on the degree of autonomy that slaves experienced, including opportunities for independent production. Traditionally, scholars have considered slaves operating under the task

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[646] Ira Berlin and Philip D Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 23.
[647] Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 158.
[648] This argument, as applied to Cuban cafetales, can be found in, Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 141–184.

system to have "enjoyed a good deal more latitude" than those in a gang system.[649] Under the task system, slaves only needed to complete specific assigned tasks and then were allowed to labor under their own direction or attend to personal or familial concerns. Often, this "extra" time was spent in the cultivation of subsistence plots as the task system allowed planters to utilize their slaves in the internal production of food staples, both for the need of the plantation and for those of the slaves. Furthermore, in relation to the organization of labor according to crop specificity scholars agree that "the growing cycle of some staples, most notably tobacco and cotton easily accommodated estate productions of foodstuffs."[650] In this context, the task system, in combination with certain economies like tobacco, was the most conducive to permitting independent plot production. However detailing exact labor arrangements with precision is difficult in the context of Cuban tobacco cultivation. While scholars know *what* slaves did in the agricultural economy of Cuban tobacco, *how* they did it is less clear. The scholarship is inconclusive about whether slaves in Pinar del Río cultivated tobacco in the context of gang or task systems.

However, the arrangement of slave labor is known for certain Cuban slave economies and a comparison of tobacco with coffee production, both contrasting with Cuban sugar cultivation, suggests that slaves on vegas were organized in systems similar to the labor arrangements of coffee plantations. According to Van Norman, slaves on cafetales performed a mixture of gang and task labor, in contrast to the near exclusive use of gang labor on ingenios.[651] The reason to assume tobacco's connection with coffee is

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649 Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 14.
650 Berlin and Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy*, 6.
651 In Van Norman's phrasing, slaves laboring on coffee labor existed "between the poles of the task / labor continuum." Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 143.

that sugar was distinct in its exceptional work requirements leaving coffee and tobacco cultivation much more closely linked in terms of labor expectations and routine. The differentiation between the slave systems according to degree of labor is exemplified by the similar slave makeup of cafetales and vegas. Cafetales and vegas used slaves of both genders and a wide range of ages, while ingenios predominantly used young, male slaves. If tobacco slaves labored either under the task system or under a mixture like coffee slaves, then their labor organization would have provided slaves with an enhanced opportunity to practice independent production on personal time.

In addition to specific labor arrangements allowing space for Cuban tobacco slaves to cultivate provision plots after a daily work regimen, the particular nature of tobacco cultivation also provided opportunities for slaves to practice independent production. In a system predicated upon the exploitation of labor, these opportunities were directly related to the amount of time and energy granted to the slave community by labor routines and requirements. The essential question, then, is did slaves have sufficient time and energy to successfully labor in independent production? According to Lorena Walsh and other historians, opportunities for slaves to cultivate personal garden plots corresponded to the intensity of labor. Specifically, Walsh maintains that "the greatest constraints on slaves' independent production" were "time and energy."[652] Similarly, Richard Sheridan contends that in consideration of "the time allowed to cultivate the provision grounds, it is obvious that the best grounds would not suffice unless time and strength were allowed by the master for their cultivation."[653] It is impossible to measure

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[652] Lorena S. Walsh, "Work and the Slave Economy," in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, ed. Trevor Burnard and Gad Heuman (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 113.
[653] Richard B. Sheridan, "Strategies of Slave Subsistence: The Jamaican Case Reconsidered," in *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas*, ed. Mary Turner, 1995, 55.

with any precision the amount of time and energy available to slaves laboring on Cuban vegas. However, the one detailed example of the labor routine of tobacco slaves that exists—the description of the vega *Santa Isabel*—illustrates the potential opportunities for independent activity. Slaves on this plantation started their work day at four in the morning by collecting and taking care of the estate's animals. At sunrise, slaves began their tobacco-related tasks; these varied throughout the seasonal cycle, but most often included weeding and pruning the tobacco plants or cutting and collecting the leaves. During the season of light activity, slaves were assigned various maintenance chores to be finished before lunch and rest. After this period, slaves would continue with tobacco-related labor until nightfall, when the rest of the evening and morning fell under their province.

Although constrained, the work routine of the vega *Santa Isabel* provided these particular slaves with time during which they could have been creating and maintaining individual subsistence plots. By contrast, laboring conditions on ingenios were literally life exhausting, and time requirements were nearly all consuming. While this comparison does not prove a higher ratio of provision plots on vegas than on ingenios, it does suggest that two of the more critical components for the existence of independent production, time and energy, were more available under one crop economy than the other.

Tobacco Housing

Slaves' housing structures also determined the possibilities for independent production. As Van Norman argues, the "use of provision grounds" was "closely related to the type of housing used on a particular farm."[654] More specifically, Theresa Singleton maintains that bohíos, in contrast to barracones, "facilitated small backyard food

[654] Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 167.

production of garden crops and keeping animals such as pigs and chickens."[655] The importance of slave housing as a platform for facilitating independent production is directly related to who was living in the quarters and the degree to which these structures permitted slave movement. As chapter four demonstrated, slave housing structures responded to patterns of demography and determined degrees of mobility.

In terms of demographic makeup, plantations with higher ratios of female and child slaves, and by extension family units, required independent housing structures, such as the bohíos found on Cuban vegas. The existence of families thus played an important role in facilitating provision plots for slaves. According to Berlin and Morgan, "almost always the slaves' economy was a family economy" especially as women "did much of the marketing, and children and old people worked in the garden"; although ultimately provision plots "involved all members of the household."[656] Other historians have echoed this view, including Barbara Bush and Lorena Walsh, each of whom emphasize, that men, women and children, as a family unit, each had distinct roles in provision-plot cultivation. Walsh notably adds that planters routinely turned to the "labour of young, old, and partially disabled slaves" as an economical way to raise "more provisions to reduce expensive food imports."[657] An example of this dynamic specific to Cuban tobacco is provided by one nineteenth-century traveler who noted the primary responsibility of a child slave on a vega was looking after the estate's pigs.[658] It is unclear whether this pig belonged to the slave's family or to the plantation owner, but the

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655 Theresa A Singleton, "An Archaeological Study of Slavery at a Cuban Coffee Plantation," in *Dialogues in Cuban Archaeology*, ed. L. Antonio Curet, Shannon Lee Dawdy, and Gabino La Rosa Corzo (University of Alabama Press, 2005), 194.
656 Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 36.
657 Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), 47; Walsh, "Work and the Slave Economy," 112.
658 Nathan C. Green, *Story of Spain and Cuba* (International News and Book Co., 1896), 276.

example still demonstrates how demographically diverse slave populations were used in subsistence production.[659]

Just as planters found family units useful for subsistence production, slaves also benefited from this connection. The historian Mary Turner maintains that "the family households with their common property interest in the grounds and houses" produced subsistence activity organized around family production, which "enabled the slaves to establish a nucleus of family solidarities to sustain them in the vicissitudes of life."[660] On a practical level, the existence of extended family relations allowed slaves with children to achieve higher production results than single slaves, according to one contemporary observer.[661] Additionally, Morgan argues that slave families "could function as significant *economic* units for at least part of the working day"; similarly, Walsh contends that "those who benefited most" from free time and energy "were slaves with a spouse living on the same plantation" and "extended families that included several members of productive age."[662] The relationship between slave family formations with independent production was not only intimate, but critical in granting slaves determinative control over organizing essential elements of their world. Because the prevalence of family units corresponded to the viability of independent production, estates with heterogeneous slave populations, such as the vegas of Pinar del Río in the nineteenth century, were far more conducive to independent production than were other slave-based economies.

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[659] Historians have claimed that subsistence plots in Cuba were often delineated as the province of older slaves who were incapable of hard labor. Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez et al., eds., *A History of the Cuban Nation* (La Habana: Editorial Historia de la Nación Cubana, S.A, 1958), 1: 288.

[660] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (The Press University of the West Indies, 1982), 45.

[661] As quoted in Woodville Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands: Competition for Resources During Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 12, no. 1 (1991): 63.

[662] Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," 403, italics in original; Walsh, "Work and the Slave Economy," 114.

Independent living arrangements, such as those found on cafetales and vegas, allowed for provision grounds in the immediate vicinity of the structure as well as unsupervised mobility to travel to grounds elsewhere. The influence that particular housing structures had on slaves' ability to engage in autonomous production can be seen in the impact that the negation of these conditions had upon slaves. Bergad contends that "as slaves were increasingly concentrated on large plantations where strict vigilance and discipline reigned," the opportunity for slaves to have and maintain individual subsistence plots "diminished considerably."[663] In contrast, bohíos allowed for individual slave production sites in the immediate vicinity of housing structures that slaves considered their own property. Known as yard plots these sites permeated slave societies where independent housing units existed for slaves, including Cuba. Usually, yard plots were sites of production attached to housing units and smaller than provision plots located in the fields of the plantation. Contemporary observers on the island remarked that on some plantations, "chicken and pigs, which were the private property" of slaves, "were cooped up just behind the cabins" and that on one particular estate, provision plots consisted of a "colony of hogs and fowls."[664] Spatial arrangements permitting yard plots that included hen coops and pigsties represented another layer of the internal economy and were of critical importance in the development of independent production by slaves.

In addition to yard plots, field conucos and the specific requirements of raising animals that needed "constant care," had important implications for slave autonomy as to attend to both aspects of this informal economy slaves needed mobility to travel to and from provision plots located throughout the plantation. This mobility was only possible

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663 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 82.
664 Maturin Murray Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and co, 1885), 237; John Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 105.

for slaves living in housing structures that were not externally secured. As David Sartorius notes that for slaves living in locked barracones, "unrestricted trips" to conucos "would have been placed well out of their reach."[665] Housing arrangements that facilitated unrestricted movement were critical to the independent production by slaves. One vega in Pinar del Río provides and illustration of this mobility. In 1846 in the partido of Consolación del Sur, located within the heart of the Vuelta Abajo, a slave of Don Dionisio Delgado was "found dead" in the middle of the night. The slave was found in the "*platanal*" or plantain grove, of Don Delgado's vega.[666] And while the historical record does not permit much analysis beyond these few facts, a few noteworthy developments concerning the autonomous nature of slave life on a vega can be gathered. This includes the reality that this slave (and at least one other) had the opportunity and ability to move about at night. Regardless of whether this slave had permission, he was operating unsupervised in a remote spot on subsistence plots at the boundaries of Don Delgado's vega. What he was doing in a secondary food plot and the reasons for his death are not known, but his presence there demonstrates a substantial degree of autonomy.[667] In this region, under this crop, and during this period, slaves had both access to time and the opportunity to develop an internal economy.

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[665] David A Sartorius, "Slavery, Conucos, and the Local Economy: Ingenio Santa Rosalia, Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1860-1886" (UNC, 1997), 39.

[666] "Diligencias criminales formados sobre [ ] el motive encontrarse [ ] el negro José [ ] esclavo de Don Dionisio Delgado," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 223, exp. 1332, 1846.

[667] For other instances of slaves being murdered on a vega also suggesting a lack of supervision combined with independent mobility, see "Diligencias formadas en virtud de haberse encontrado un negro bozal Félix ahorcado por un esclavo de José Maria Rodriguez," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 224, exp. 1341,1825; "Expediente formado por haberse hallado ahorcado al negro Miguel Gangá, esclavo de Don Toribio Contreras," leg. 225, exp. 1373, 1847; "Expediente sobre autos formado por [ ] en la vega de la morena libre María del Rosario a un negro muerto," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 252, exp. 1512, 1837.

Tobacco Land

A final component of Cuban tobacco slavery that enabled independent production originates was planters' economically driven decision to devote land to this enterprise. Berlin and Morgan argue that the overlap between crop dictates and custom was important in directing the existence and extent of an internal economy within particular slave regimes. They argue that independent production by slaves "took shape at the confluence of the requirements of staple production and the demands of the established system of subsistence."[668] Tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century fits this argument: the crop's labor requirements coincided with longstanding traditions of allocating a substantial portion of the vega to slave independent production of food staples.

Van Norman has noted that direct confirmation of slaves working in conuco production is "limited"; nevertheless, he contends that there is "substantial evidence that slaves created an economy among themselves" using their conucos – although this economy depended on "the presence of land set aside for food production" on Cuban estates.[669] Historian Gloria García also argues that it was necessary to have space on the vega for the cultivation of subsistence crops and that the allocation of land for slave-based subsistence production was a defining feature of the Cuban tobacco vega in the nineteenth century.[670] A wide range of contemporary accounts and documents further demonstrate this occurrence. Both José Garciá de Arboleya and Samuel Hazard maintained that at least half of all tobacco land on a vega was used for food crops, and

668 Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 24.
669 Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 193.
670 Gloria García, "El Auge De La Sociedad Esclavista En Cuba," in *Historia De Cuba: La Colonia: Evolución Socioeconómica y Formación Nacional: De Los Orígenes Hasta 1867*, Instituto De Historia De Cuba, 1994, 235.

Valentin Pardo y Betancourt indicated that substantial parts of the vegas of Pinar del Río were devoted to the cultivation of food crops.[671] Other writers provide more specific details concerning what was grown on the tobacco vega. For example, Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer claimed that "the veguero cultivates plantains, yucca, malanga and sweet potatoes, the food production of the country," and that the cost of feeding the vega's slaves was reduced by this practice.[672] Abiel Abbot added that tobacco planters cultivated a variety of crops, including corn, potatoes, and yams, which "provide food for their laborers" while José Fernández mentioned that one of the benefits of tobacco cultivation was the ancillary side economy associated with food crops such as corn and other staples that were grown on parts of the vega.[673] Additionally, Ramón de la Sagra argued that a well-cultivated vega includes a portion of land dedicated to bananas, cassava, and sweet potato.[674] Sagra also pointed out that in the Vuelta Abajo, rice was harvested in higher volumes per caballería than elsewhere in Cuba, and that customarily, vegueros planted a significant section of vegetables that were "fast growing and have large volume."[675]

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671 José García de Arboleya, *Manual De La Isla De Cuba; Compendio De Su Historia, Geografía, Estadística, Y Administración* (Habana: Impr. del Gobierno y Captianía General, 1852), 142; Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford, Conn: Hartford publishing company, 1871), 330; Valentin Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos De Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861* (Habana: Impr. del Tiempo, 1863), 15.

672 Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...* (Madrid: Colegio national de Sordo-Mudos, 1851), 137.

673 Abiel Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, The Black Heritage Library Collection (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 137; José Fernández de Madrid, *Memoria sobre el comercio, cultivo y elaboracion del tabaco de esta Isla* (Imprenta Fraternal de los Diaz de Castro, impresores del Consulado nacional, 1821), 3.

674 Ramón de la Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba: Historia física y política. Introducción, Geografía, clima,población, Agricultura*, vol. 1 (Librería de Arthus Bertrand, 1842), 118–120.

675 Ramón de la Sagra, *Anales de ciencias, agricultura, comercio y artes* (Havana: Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía general, August 1827), 239, 288.

Archival examples include one slave-owning veguero in Pinar del Río who had two vegas, one of which also contained a substantial platanal.[676] Another large-scale tobacco planter in this province listed among his possessions four vegas, each of which had at least one platanal.[677] The occurrence of mixed-use agricultures among Cuban tobacco cultivation was not limited to large-scale production. The example of Juan de Dios Diaz illustrates this: the former slave grew corn and sweet potatoes alongside tobacco, which suggests a natural relationship between tobacco and food cultivation.[678] Moreover, various articles published by the Sociedad Patriótica throughout the nineteenth century also testified to the mixed-use characteristic of Cuban tobacco production. According to these descriptions, vegueros in Pinar del Río took care to have food staples planted in order to sustain their family, but also frequently to sell, as the veguero traditionally breeds pigs, chickens, and other domestic fowls that are meant for feeding the family and for supplying the surrounding neighborhoods. These articles concluded that when vegas were "well attended, they provided to the nearby towns livestock, food staples, grains and fruits."[679]

The vegueros of Pinar del Río were well able to supply the province with food. In 1841, vegas accounted for 75 percent of all farms in the province, which suggests that the majority of the 52,669 pigs and 52,137 cattle recorded resided upon the 3,826 listed

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676 "Expediente de testamentaria de Dona Prudencia Diaz para formar inventario [ ] de bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 90, exp. 234, 1845.

677 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don Manuel Diaz donde la [ ] hijos piden que se haga un inventario de los bienes" AHPPR, IJC, leg. 123, exp. 524, 1827. For example of a slave planter listing a bee enterprise alongside his vega, see "Expediente sobre autos de intestado de Don Santiago Ramos donde sus hijos piden se investique la muerte de su padre y se haga el inventario de los bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg.124, exp. 537, 1833.

678 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado al intestado del negro libre Juan de Dios Diaz para que se le haga entrega de los bienes," AHPPR, IJC leg. 135, exp. 662, 1844.

679 Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 4 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1837), 106, 110.

vegas in the area.[680] Additionally, another contemporary report advised that not all land should be devoted to tobacco production, as some should be set aside for root vegetables, rice, and corn, as well "some pasture land for oxen and cows" - this was in addition to a suggestion that vegas should rotate crops.[681] These reports, archival examples, and contemporary accounts effectively demonstrate two critical components related to the development of provision plots: first, land on Cuban vegas was available to devote to such production, and second, subsistence cultivation was part of the regular work requirements of this labor regime.[682]

Subsistence cultivation, particularly in the form of the slave conuco, was not limited to tobacco. However, there were demonstrable differences in the existence of conucos within Cuba's agricultural economy according to time and place. As expansion of the sugar industry increased the profits associated with land use, planters progressively devoted all available resources, including slaves' conucos, to sugar production in order to maximize profits. In the nineteenth century, Francisco Arango y Parreño mentioned that

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[680] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 12 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1841), 74. Speaking of one partido within the Vuelta Abajo, Guane, and its vegas, the authors of another article cite the integration of plantains and malangas. Ibid., 12:303.

[681] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 8 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 281.

[682] So engrained was this tradition of interspacing tobacco cultivation with subsistence production that it carried over after abolition. Robert Porter noted that the traditional expenditures of tobacco cultivation in this period included devoting half of a standard size farm to tobacco plants, with the other allocated to vegetable farming. Robert P. Porter, *Industrial Cuba; Being a Study of Present Commercial and Industrial Conditions, with Suggestions as to the Opportunities Presented in the Island for American Capital, Enterprise, and Labour* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1899), 310. See, also Victor S Clark, "Labor Conditions in Cuba.," in *Bulletin of the Department of Labor 41*, by United States Dept. of Labor (G.P.O., 1902), 700–701. In fact, the simultaneous cultivation of food crops alongside tobacco spanned not only time periods, but also geographic regions. Walsh has noted that corn and wheat were routinely grown by slaves in addition to the main cash crop of tobacco in the Chesapeake region of the United States - a reflection of innate characteristics and practices of tobacco cultivation that facilitated such dual production. Lorena S. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville, VA, 1993).

many of the laws designed to ameliorate the conditions of slaves in Cuba, including reduced working times and the existence of conucos, did not apply to ingenios.[683] Numerous other contemporary accounts reflect this assessment. For example, Richard Dana noted that not even fruit trees were allowed to grow on these farms, because no labor could be diverted or "spared" from the sugar harvest; as a result, owners imported fruit from other farms.[684] Another traveler wrote that the owner of a sugar plantation buys everything he needs to operate his plantation; this traveler declared that there was "not a single milch-cow on the estate!"[685] Similarly, Antonio Gallenga remarked that sugar owners used all possible acreage for their mills, to the point that "he grudges half a rood [sic] of land for mere cool shade or pleasure-ground." Robert Russell, upon visiting an ingenio, calculated that out of a total 7,000 acres, 1,600 were devoted to sugar cane while only 200 acres were granted to the growing of subsistence food (Indian corn), with the result that "large importations of provisions became indispensably necessary."[686]

Historians have also argued that provision plots were not used on ingenios because economically, subsistence production competed poorly with sugar cultivation. For most Caribbean slaves societies, topography and stages of production are generally considered the most important components in planters's decisions to allow or not allow for independent production by slaves.[687] That is, such decisions depended on whether

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683 Francisco Arango y Parreño, *Obras del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño*, vol. 1 (Impr. de Howson y Heinen, 1888), 655.

684 Richard Henry Dana, *To Cuba and Back* (Warwick, NY: 1500 Books, 2007), 100.

685 Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 147.

686 Antonio Carlo Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), 95; Robert Russell, *North America, Its Agriculture and Climate; Containing Observations on the Agriculture and Climate of Canada, the United States, and the Island of Cuba.* (Edinburgh,, 1857), 197. See also, James Rawson, *Cuba* (New-York,, 1847), 54.

687 Hilary McD Beckles, "An Economic Life of Their Own: Slaves as Commodity Producers and Distributors in Barbados," in *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, ed.

available land was prime sugar-growing land or on the margins of sugar's expansion, and whether production was more pioneer- or frontier-style or took place in more settled conditions. For Cuba, a general appraisal of the extent of provision plots on ingenios is given by Franklin Knight who concludes that "almost all of the land of the ingenio went into sugar cane" while the importation of food was deemed "both more desirable and more economical than domestic production."[688] Other historians argue that slaves on sugar plantations did engage in independent production, but that as expansion of the industry amplified the profits associated with land use, planters increasingly converted provision plots to sugar production and imported other goods.[689] According to this perspective Marietta Morrissey contends that this trend was related to "plantation size, sugar output, and processing potential" with the importation of staples "most notable where sugar production peaked as late as the nineteenth century."[690] Morrissey concludes that the Cuban ingenio "represents a complete cycle of planter attitudes toward provision growing from approval and dependence on the product to a policy of eradication" over

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Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (London, England: Frank Cass, 1991), 32; Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838*, 46; Neville Hall, "Slaves Use of Their 'Free' Time in the Danish Virgin Islands in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Caribbean History* 13 (1980): 25; Marietta Morrissey, *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean*, Studies in Historical Social Change (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 55; Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands," 50; Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 141.

[688] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 67.

[689] Laird Bergad adds an interesting element in the discussion concerning how sugar plantation owners provision their estates in his analysis of *refacción* contracts – essentially customary and legal agreements that bind the ingenio owner to sell a percentage of his crop in exchange for financial considerations, including supplies such as food, clothes, and medical care. Laird W. Bergad, "The Economic Viability of Sugar Production Based on Slave Labor in Cuba, 1859-1878," *Latin American Research Review* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 95–113. See also, Sartorius, "Slavery, Conucos, and the Local Economy," 20. And Torrente who includes in the purview of the refaccionistas, "the food and clothing of slaves." Mariano Torrente, *Memoria Sobre La Esclavitude En La Isla De Cuba: Con Observaciones Sobre Los Asertos De La Prensa Inglesa Relativos Al Trafico De Esclavos* (C. Wood, 1853), 18, fn #1.

[690] Morrissey, *Slave Women in the New World*, 47.

the course of the nineteenth century.[691] Laird Bergad details this specific pattern in the central sugar region of Matanzas, where from the early nineteenth century on "economic factors…changed decisively" such that the options for planters to allow independent food production "were effectively closed" as a result of the high value placed on sugar land.[692] Moreno Fraginals also agrees that planters' desire for slave provision grounds dissipated as the concern for maximizing profits came to control all dimensions of the ingenio. As a result, all land was needed for some aspect of production, and planters found it financially more advantageous to import food to feed their slaves rather than take up desirable land and time spent cultivating these plots. According to Moreno Fraginals, the use of provision plots on large ingenios came into "increasing disuse" as planters exhibited a "decided tendency to eliminate" all slave property as well as "the *conuco* system" in its entirety.[693]

For plantation owners, the decision of whether to allow conucos or to instead import food came down to the economic question of how best to feed a dotación while maximizing profits. Traditionally in Caribbean slave societies, this decision depended on a variety of interrelated factors, including land allocation, crop specificity, labor requirements, housing structures, and chronological development within the plantation-economy spectrum. In Cuba, the degree of influence these factors had in structuring planter response to provision plots can be seen in the differences between sugar and

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691 Ibid., 55.

692 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 234–235; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom*, Updated ed., 1st Da Capo Press ed (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 62.

693 Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba, 1760-1860.* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 56, 100, italics in original. Moreno Fraginals goes onto to suggest that if any sugar planters were arguing for the continued use of conucos for slaves to work on in the off periods, the realty of slave life on ingenios belied this opinion, as for those slaves on the large sugar plantations "there were no longer any rest days." Ibid, 56.

tobacco production during the nineteenth century as provision plots "developed within, and were dependent upon, [the] temporal and spatial constraints" particular to the plantation system under which they emerged.[694] For tobacco, its labor demands were uniquely structured to allow space and time for subsistence production by slaves. As a consequence, tobacco generated new economic roles for slaves as producers, marketers, and consumers and these new roles enabled slaves to fundamentally transform their lives and experiences of slavery.

SLAVES AS ECONOMIC ACTORS

The value of an internal economy for the slave community on vegas in Pinar del Río was immediate as conucos were the essential catalyst that enabled slaves in Pinar del Río to assume new economic roles and identities as independent producers. Across various slave regimes throughout the Caribbean in the nineteenth century, slaves engaged in a multitude of independent economic activities centered on food production. Variations included kitchen gardens arranged next to independent housing structures, individual or family provision plots on the margins of plantations' boundaries, animal husbandry, and at times, hunting and fishing. All forms were intended to supplement the plantation's food supplies, either for the master's consumption or for the slave community. Yet each of these forms of independent production was also an economically valuable part of the internal economy as slaves used these practices to establish new roles as self-producers. These new roles were primarily based on surplus production of food staples and largely originated in the subsistence cultivation of plantation plots. Moreover, planters who encouraged their slaves to engage in subsistence cultivation found it difficult to control

694 Dale Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar: Martinique and the World Economy, 1830-1848* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 260.

how much food slaves produced and even the amount of land dedicated to this endeavor. As a result, slaves routinely focused their energies on producing as great a quantity of staples as possible and on extending their allocated plots to encroach upon primary plantation plots.

According to one historian, slaves were able to generate "startling" surpluses from subsistence production.[695] Fittingly, slaves attached great importance to provision plots especially as they often perceived themselves as land owners with established rights. In this chapter's introductory quotes, one planter associated conuco production with the very essence of a slave's existence, while another contemporary observer perceived the robbing of slave-owned goods as tantamount to stealing the very life of the slave.[696]

In Cuba, state authority sanctioned the legal and customary right for slaves to possess and maintain provision plots; the sharpest pronouncement was included in the slave code of 1842. According to Article 13 of this code, officials mandated that slaves were to be allowed to produce personal goods for both subsistence and profit and that they could use the accumulated private property for self-purchase, or coartación.[697] The extent to which planters observed these rules has been debated, especially because the rules also mandated progressive slave regulations such as maximum working hours, minimum housing conditions, labor restrictions for the young and old, the encouragement of marriage, and allowances for food and clothing—all ordinances that the majority of

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695 Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 126; Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 29.
696 García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 35; Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 155.
697 García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 86–90. See also Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba Desde 1850 á 1873: Colección De Informes, Memorias, Proyectos y Antecedentes Sobre El Gobierno De La Isla De Cuba, Relativos Al Citado Periodo, Que Ha Reunido Por Comisión Del Gobierno D. Cárlos De Sedano y Cruzat*, ed. Cárlos de Sedano y Cruzat (Impr. Nacional, 1873), 296.

Cuba's sugar plantations in the nineteenth century most likely did not enforce. Nevertheless, contemporary accounts testify that slaves were producers who accumulated material goods through independent production.

According to Egor Sivers, a nineteenth century Russian scientist and traveler, Cuban slaves enjoyed a comparatively better life than slaves elsewhere in the Americas, principally because slaves in Cuba had property, "garden and livestock." And contrary to the law, the custom was to pass slaves' possessions to heirs after death.[698] Sivers unequivocally claims that property ownership stemmed from provision production and material conditions of Cuban slaves. However, in the context of Cuban slavery, contemporary observations did not necessarily represent the institution as a whole. Cuban slaves were able to produce goods for personal consumption and procurement, but the ability to do so varied according to labor regime, time period, and location. Furthermore, many of the contemporary descriptions of slaves as independent producers reflect visits to a particular set of plantations that were easily accessible from Havana and had a reputation for welcoming foreign observation. Indeed, there appear to have been well-traveled circuits for foreign observers as some of these accounts overlap one another. Moreover, while some Cuban planters felt no compunction over the morality of slavery, many did. As a result, the most visited plantations were often the most enlightened, and as a result, descriptions represent planters' concern over the perception of slavery as much as they represent the true scope of independent production by slaves.

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[698] As quoted in Borís Lukín, "Viajes De Rusia a Cuba a Mediados Del Siglo XIX," in *Historia De Cuba*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Academia de las Ciencias de la URSS, 1979), 86. For instance sin other slave societies of slaves passing material goods to heirs, see Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838*, 48; Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar*, 273–274; Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands," 60.

Characterizations of the internal economy among Cuban plantations indicate innate biases as determined by the selection of plantation visited, but they also unmistakably demonstrate the extent to which independent production was possible under this system of slavery in the nineteenth century.[699] For example, Abiel Abbot said of slaves' animal husbandry that "there is scarcely a male or female adult slave that has not his hog" – and pigs, according to Abbot, were in high demand and sold well.[700] Similarly, John Wurdemann described slaves on one plantation having "a colony of hogs and fowls, the source of many a hard dollar to them, and the object of their constant care."[701] In Wurdemann's account, this colony of animals was located near a collection of bohíos, suggesting an additional link between independent housing structures and slaves' internal economy.

Independent housing structures common to Cuban vegas facilitated personal production by slaves, but certain sugar plantations were also described as substantially invested in slave-based conuco production. James O'Kelly and another traveler writing under a pseudonym both identified conucos on ingenios.[702] Although this type of production was rare on Cuban sugar plantations in the nineteenth century, these descriptions still add to the underpopulated list of spaces for autonomy under Cuban slavery.[703] Maturin Ballou also made this point: writing in the nineteenth century, he

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699 Marrietta Morrissey qualifies the internal economy another way, arguing that in the context of slavery it may have been "never substantial but often effective." Morrissey, *Slave Women in the New World*, 46.
700 Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 97, 136.
701 Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba.*, 105.
702 James O'Kelly, *The Mambi-land, or, Adventures of a Herald Correspondent in Cuba.* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1874), 58; Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 147.
703 On the uniqueness of ingenios facilitating conucos, one of the plantations described as allowing this type of activity was so exceptional in its practices and workings that the owner attempted to instruct slaves in religion and sought to educate them through teaching of reading and writing –a situation that the observer had neither seen nor heard of on the island. The owner also endeavored to eliminate work hours at

noted that slaves sometimes owned pigs, for which "drovers pay fifty dollars apiece to the slaves."[704] Ballou contended that this practice was "a *redeeming* feature," but qualifies it as "a bitter pill at best."[705] Yet elsewhere, Ballou concluded that the internal economy was a viable system because slaves "had no expenses to meet in the way of supporting themselves…so that whatever money they have realized by the several ways open to them has been clear profit."[706] While Ballou described the multiple avenues available to slaves to practice independent production; he also noted the quantity of money allowed to them as substantial enough to secure their freedom after only a few transactions. This description demonstrates the degree to which conucos penetrated Cuban plantations and their overarching impact as a primary means to achieving freedom.[707]

Slaves as Producers

The tradition of slave provision plots in certain agricultural systems in Cuba originated in the indigenous population's use of subsistence crops.[708] These subsistence crops were distinguished by the manner of cultivating them: typically, a variety of crops

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night. This estate was so exceptional that it was perhaps without any comparable institution on the island. Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 147.

[704] Maturin Murray Ballou, *History of Cuba: Or, Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics ; Being a Political, Historical, and Statistical Account of the Island, from Its First Discovery to the Present Time* (Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1854), 183.

[705] Ibid., Italics in original.

[706] Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 60–61.

[707] Slave prices varied throughout the nineteenth century and according to multiple considerations; however, a contemporary of Ballou's, Richard Madden, placed the price of a slave at $500, suggesting a close link with the prices Ballou quoted for the selling of a pig. Richard Robert Madden, *The Island of Cuba: Its Resources, Progress, and Prospects, Considered in Relation Especially to the Influence of Its Prosperity on the Interests of the British West India Colonies* (London: C. Gilpin; [etc., etc.], 1849), 134.

[708] For an early history of indigenous crops being labeled as conucos, see Pedro José Guiteras, *Historia de la isla de Cuba: con notas e ilustraciones* (J.R. Lockwood, 1865), 57–60. For the use of conucos by the indigenous population and subsequent transference to the slave population, see Lourdes S. Domínguez, "Fuentes Arqueológicas En El Estudio De La Esclavitud En Cuba," in *La Esclavitude En Cuba*, 1986, 272.

were placed in earth mounds measuring several feet high and wide. The natives of Cuba called these mounds *conucos*.[709] The benefits of this method were extensive, beginning with the multiple crops the height and width of the mound permitted.[710] The Arawaks of Cuba included in their mixed plantings the two main staples: yucca, "unexcelled and perhaps unequalled in its yield of starch," and the sweet potato, which "has the advantages of producing a crop in four months." They also cultivated a variety of other plants, including gourds, arrowroot, maize, peppers, beans, peanuts, and squashes - all of which "formed part of the conuco assemblage."[711]

Beyond the tradition of food staples constituting conuco production, tobacco played a distinct role in the standard "conuco assemblage" and as a result was both a unique and integral component of the internal economy of vegas in the Vuelta Abajo during the nineteenth century. The cultivation process of tobacco uniquely lent itself to inclusion within slave provision plots. Tobacco could be grown on a small scale by individuals or families and required very little labor and land compared with other agricultural commodities such as sugar and coffee. Additionally, its agricultural cycle allowed for independent time and energy, and it came with a ready-made market. These characteristics, along with the customary existence of conucos on vegas, made tobacco cultivation well-suited for personal production by tobacco-based slaves. According to John Taylor, slaves independently produced a large and valuable quantity of tobacco in a

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[709] For definitions of conuco, see Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geografico, estadistico, historico de la Isla de Cuba*, vol. 1 (Imprenta del Establecimiento de Méllado, a cargo de don Joaquin Bernat, 1863), 214; Esteban Pichardo, *Diccionario Provincial de Voces Cubanas* (Imprenta del Gobierno, 1861), 68.

[710] Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 53. Sauer goes onto add "conuco planting gave the highest returns of food in continuous supply by simplest methods and moderate labor." Ibid., 69.

[711] Ibid., 54. For various staples cited as part of the slave conuco and its harvesting pattern, see Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1841, 12:336.

relatively easy and quick manner.[712] Also writing in the nineteenth century, Eliza Ripley said of slaves with conucos that "the thrifty ones cultivated tobacco," while Abiel Abbot observed of the conucos many "were set with tobacco, where we passed."[713] In the same period, Antonio Paula Arias argued that "in the conucos of some slaves" within the Vuelta Abajo, slaves grew tobacco in the same manner that they cultivated the larger fields of the plantation. Moreover, Paula Arias stated that for the term conuco, "one always applies this denomination" to a quantity of tobacco "that is the crop of the slaves."[714] Conuco-based tobacco was also mentioned in an article authored by the Sociedad Patriótica about the tobacco industry in Güira de Melena, a municipality bordering the Vuelta Abajo and Havana. In this 1838 article, the writer lamented the demise of tobacco production in the area, which had recently been eclipsed to the point of obscurity by the tobacco economy of the Vuelta Abajo, so that the only tobacco grown in the area now was for "*conuco* or just for distraction and nothing more."[715]

An additional feature of tobacco cultivation uniquely influenced the ability of these slaves to act as producers. While food appears to have been the primary product of independent slave agriculture, slaves throughout Caribbean and Atlantic societies, with a surplus of free time, manufactured a variety of other goods, including pots, baskets, furniture, and other wood and leather products. Sidney Mintz describes these products as "utilitarian craft items" while Berlin and Morgan suggest that "such products enriched

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712 Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 207.

713 Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 176; Eliza Ripley, *From Flag to Flag: a Woman's Adventures and Experiences in the South During the War, in Mexico, and in Cuba* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889), 186.

714 Antonio Paula Arias, *El Veguero De Vuelta Abajo. Apuntes Sobre El Cultivo Del Tabaco Ó, Breve Reseña De Las Causas De La Depreciación Del Fruto y Del Sistema Que Para Aquél Se Estableció.* (Pinar del Rio: Est. tip. de M. Vives, 1887), 53, 41.

715 Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 7 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1838), 259. Italics in original.

slave life and provided slaves with essential commodities to trade."[716] In Cuba, archeologists have uncovered pottery, tableware, manufactured beads, various other crafts, and ceramic objects that slaves may have used as gaming pieces or religious artifacts, while historians have also found among slave populations religious items including amulets and "fetishes," or symbolic figures made out of animal and plant parts.[717] While these articles are hard to detail where they came from, due to the nature of enslavement, they must have been "in high demand" due to their scarcity. As a result, the ability to produce craft items allowed for "a kind of second occupation" for slaves who possessed the means to produce such articles.[718] And although there is not a direct link to tobacco production and the manufacturing of these slave generated goods, tobacco production did permit relatively more time out of the primary work on the cash crop of the plantation. Moreover, there is evidence that a particular type of slave produced goods on Cuban vegas facilitated a different kind of "second occupation": the manufacture of cigarettes.

In terms of Cuban smoking habits, according to Pardo y Betancourt, "with few exceptions, men and women, from before puberty until the end of their days" smoked. Maturin Ballou claimed that consumption of cigars and cigarettes was "incredibly large in Cuba" with "every man, woman, and child …addicted to the habit." Ballou finally concluded that "eating, drinking, and truly it would also seem, sleeping, they smoke, smoke, smoke."[719] According to an account published by the Sociedad Patriotica in 1836,

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716 Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 200; Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 32.
717 Singleton, "An Archaeological Study of Slavery at a Cuban Coffee Plantation"; Theresa A Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations," *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (2001): 108–110; Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 303.
718 Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 303.
719 Pardo y Betancourt, *Informe Ilustrado y Estadistico: Redactó y Dió Sobre Los Elementos De Riqueza Del Tabaco En El Año 1861*, 10; Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 260. For nineteenth-

"from the rich landowner to the miserable slave," everyone in Cuba enjoyed smoking.[720] For the most part, Cuba's manufacturing process for tobacco, both for internal and international markets, was located in the urban environs of Havana.[721] However, many contemporary observers note that the process also extended to tobacco farms. According to Samuel Hazard, "Vegueros" were a particular class of cigar defined by its place of manufacture -on vegas - and were much admired, suggesting that this was a known type of labor that was practiced and profitable.[722]

Antonio Bachiller y Morales, writing in conjunction with the Sociedad Económica in 1835, suggested paying free workers on tobacco farms to produce manufactured tobacco products as a way to make Cuba's vegas larger and more profitable. [723] However, at that time, slaves were already engaged in that particular labor. One report from this period said that female slaves made and sold a type of hand-rolled cigarette; Henry Murray also reported that female slaves sold hand-rolled cigarettes.[724]

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century accounts of the ubiquitous smoking, see Joseph Judson Dimock, *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock*, Latin American Silhouettes (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 93; Madden, *The Island of Cuba*, 181; Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 421; Frederick T. Townshend, *Wild Life in Florida, with a Visit to Cuba* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1875), 172; Carlton Holmes Rogers, *Incidents of Travel in the Southern States and Cuba with a Description of the Mammoth Cave* (General Books LLC, 2010), 73–74, 83–84; George Hallam, *Narrative of a Voyage from Montego Bay, in the Island of Jamaica, to England ... Across the Island of Cuba to Havanna:* (Printed for C.J.G. & F. Rivington, 1831), 43.

[720] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 2 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1836), 33.

[721] For discussion of tobacco manufacturing in Havana, see Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

[722] Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 221. This is also confirmed by Abbot, Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 54.

[723] As quoted in Leví Marrero, *Cuba, Economía Y Sociedad*, vol. 11 (Río Piedras, P.R: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 59.

[724] Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 161; Henry A. Murray, *Lands of the Slave and the Free: Or, Cuba, The United States, and Canada.* (London,, 1857), 309.

Additionally, Ramón de la Sagra noted that this immensely productive activity was perfectly suited for the large amount of free time that the vegueros had when they weren't cultivating their principal crop.[725] Moreover, Sagra suggested that this secondary production was ideal for the weaker elements of the veguero's workforce, principally women and the young, many of whom were enslaved in tobacco-based dotaciones.[726] By providing the necessary raw material, the time, and the ideal laboring population, tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río provided another means by which slaves could produce valuable commodities to supplement their independent production.

John Taylor, Antonio Paula Arias, Samuel Hazard, Henry Murray and other nineteenth-century observers have described slaves harvesting and manufacturing tobacco as part of their conuco plots. A few historians have also identified tobacco production as part of the slaves' economy. This is especially true for the early periods of Cuba's colonial history: Diana Iznaga locates the origins of tobacco as a primary component of conucos in the widespread practice of tobacco cultivation among both Cuba's indigenous peoples and recently arriving Africans.[727] Orlando García Martínez also dates the connection between tobacco and conuco production back to the beginnings of Cuban slavery; he notes that as early as the seventeenth century, conuco production could be found in regional vegas. In the same era, María Díaz describes a type of sharecropping among tobacco workers who may or may not have been slaves but who

[725] Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:292.
[726] Ibid., 1:295.
[727] Diana Iznaga, *La Burguesía Esclavista Cubana*, Historia De Cuba (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1987), 61.

cultivated 2,000 tobacco plants per laborer, a quantity of such minimal value, according to the Royal Tobacco Factory, that Díaz records these farms as "conucos."[728]

In perhaps the strongest argument for the early association of tobacco as primary component of conuco cultivation, Charlotte Cosner has found considerable evidence that tobacco conucos were prevalent among slaves laboring on Cuba's vegas. Employing archival data in the form of *tazmias*, accounting records of tobacco cultivation unique to the eighteenth century, Cosner demonstrates that in the last decades of that century, "slaves not only grew tobacco, but were responsible for independently producing a considerable portion of each year's crop."[729] According to Cosner, in the area around Trinidad in central Cuba, nearly 200 slave conucos were responsible for 18 percent of the area's total tobacco production in 1774.[730] Closer to Pinar del Río and during the same period, several slaves cultivated tobacco on their own and for themselves, leaving Cosner to conclude that "slaves regularly grew tobacco on their own account."[731]

In most slave societies, it was common for slaves to cultivate the same cash crop under which they labored as part of their provision production. Yet in the context of Cuba's plantation economy of the nineteenth century, dominated by sugar, coffee, and tobacco, it was unusual for slaves to independently produce a cash crop in addition to food cultivation. Among these three crops, only tobacco permitted cultivation on an individual or family level with limited labor and space requirements, and only tobacco

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[728] Orlando García Martínez, "Estudio De La Economía Cienfueguera Desde La Fundación De La Colonia Fernandina De Jagua Hasta Mediados Del Siglo XIX," *Islas* no. 55–56 (1977): 117–69, as quoted in Sartorius, "Slavery, Conucos, and the Local Economy," 43; María Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre : Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 381, fn. 52.

[729] Charlotte Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave: The Social History of Cuba's Tobacco Farmers, 1763--1817" (Florida International University, 2008), 94.

[730] Ibid.

[731] Ibid., 95–97.

involved uncomplicated manufacturing processes. Tobacco was easy to transport, both in raw and manufactured form, had an insatiable market, and was grown on estates that had a culture of allowing independent production by slaves. These conditions favored a robust relationship between tobacco and independent slave production. As testament to this, an article written by Sociedad Patriótica described "the plantings of tobacco as the *principal branch of the conuco and not associated with the profits of an ingenio.*"[732] Slaves produced their own tobacco beginning in the earliest stages of Cuban slavery, and eventually, the very word conuco came to be associated with tobacco production by slaves.

Slaves as Marketers

The unique nature of tobacco cultivation, especially the direct connection between raising tobacco and conuco production, facilitated the existence of an independent economy among slaves. This independent economy had a significant impact on the lives of slaves on Cuban vegas. Beyond the immediate gains of augmenting food allowances, provision production permitted slaves to acquire surplus goods, including additional produce, animal by-products, and even manufactured goods such as finished tobacco products. This foundation enabled slaves to perform new roles and take additional independent action as marketers and consumers of these goods.[733]

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[732] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 6 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1838), 478. Italics in original. Speaking to slave societies in North America, Berlin and Morgan directly point out this occurrence for the internal tobacco cultivation by slaves in the Chesapeake region, yet also suggest that slaves in the Caribbean independently produced many staples, "although never sugar." Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 30.

[733] There are additional ancillary, but critical, benefits of conucos within the slave system for the slave communities that are outside the scope of this work. For the use of provision plots as a means of contestation of authority see Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*; Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838*, 47; Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar*, 265. Additionally, several scholars discuss slave conuco and creolization in a cultural context; they observe that provision grounds offered a unique space for slaves to continue cultural rituals and identities, develop new ones, and make

In B.W. Higman's assessment of the internal economy of slaves, he argues that "without doubt the provision ground system created the framework for relatively independent economic activity."[734] The ability to produce generates the ability to market and consume. The independent production of surplus quantities enabled slaves to participate in trade and to obtain material goods. And just as the dictates of the tobacco process structured the ability to produce it also structured slaves' ability to act as marketers and consumers. Yet, these roles very much depended upon specific housing arrangements that either provided or prohibited spaces for marketing and procurement. The degree of slaves' unrestricted movement governed their capacity to seek trading partners for the exchange of items. Meanwhile, independent and secure housing governed their ability to accumulate and maintain personal property. Mobility and autonomous housing structures were of paramount importance to slaves' ability to function as economic actors.

In the context of mobility the difference between slave systems that recognized independent production by slaves and those that did not is profound. Michael Mullin compares the slave societies of the American South and the Caribbean and concludes, in reference to the latter, that "slaves who grew much of their own food and marketed surpluses, constantly and readily traveled beyond plantation boundaries." He adds that American slaves, who were not able to take advantage of independent production, "were susceptible to stifling organizational schemes…which were designed to make plantations 'their only home.'" For Mullin, this last scenario reinforced the dependence of slaves; in

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important familial attachments to the land; see Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 346; Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 129; Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar*, 272.

[734] Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 212.

contrast "where blacks fed themselves…the process diluted white power, and slaves acted as if planters owned only their labour, not their lives or personalities."[735] Michael Mullin's comparison is transnational in scope, but the same differences are readily apparent between contrasting crop economies within Cuba.

Cuban historians have recently come to realize that Cuban slaves in rural areas had more mobility than has previously been recognized. Jose Ortega describes the "relatively fluid character" of the lives of rural slaves, arguing that mobility was very much a component of this unstructured environment. Aisha Finch claims that "nothing could have been more normal than to see black and African men (and occasionally women) moving about the [Cuban] countryside, performing tasks for their owners, or running requested errands for other white bosses."[736] This mobility enabled slaves to engage in marketing activities. Matt Childs, in his study of the Aponte slave rebellion, notes the "multiple economic, social, and familial links connecting the countryside to Havana," a significant component of which was slaves' participation in the market economy as retailers of material goods and food staples.[737]

The degree of mobility and marketing opportunities for Cuban slaves largely depended upon the slaves' work regime and plantation type. Estates with bohíos generally permitted more movement than did plantations with barracones. Yet, slaves' ability to take advantage of the economic connections between the countryside and Havana also depended on the area in which slaves labored and the degree of

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[735] Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 127.

[736] Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 45; Jose Guadalupe Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844" (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007), 217.

[737] Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 139, 64–66, 75–77.

infrastructural support for marketing activities. In Cuba, conditions were in place that enabled slaves throughout the island to participate in the market economy.

The following discussion describes these island-wide conditions and then highlights local conditions in Pinar del Río. It particularly emphasizes the way that circumstances specific to the Vuelta Abajo and the labor regime that defined the region together influenced the marketing capacity of slaves in this area. However, it is important to note that beyond the problems of knowing "how much of the produce of ground and garden entered the slaves' diet directly or was exchanged for other food items and how much was exchanged for non-food items or accumulated as cash," marketing activities are difficult to chronicle with any precision.[738] This is especially true in societies such as Cuba that lacked the kind of infrastructure for urban retailing provided by slave "higglers" in Kingston, Jamaica, or the officially approved Sunday markets for slave produce in Savannah, Georgia.[739] Cuban slaves did have access to multiple avenues for market participation; established markets elsewhere in the Caribbean and Atlantic worlds merely gave greater structure to activities that in Cuba took place on plantations, in stores and taverns, through itinerant merchants, and in trade between farms and runaway slave settlements.

Plantation Marketing

At the most basic level, the selling of goods by slaves occurred inside the plantation, in transactions between master and slaves and among slaves themselves. This type of marketing, occurring within the same plantation or on nearby estates, was

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[738] Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, 212.
[739] Lorna Simmonds, "Slave Higglering in Jamaica, 1780-1834.," *Jamaica Journal.* 20, no. 1 (1987): 31–38; Betty Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

extensive. Mintz argues that "the range of small transactions which might take place even among the slaves of a single estate must have been considerable."[740] Mintz does not directly reference tobacco-based slaves, but does describe characteristics related to these estates. In reference to intra-plantation trading, Mintz says that "the volume of exchange would have been increased by the fact that some slaves would prefer to produce minor handicrafts, some to raise small livestock, some to grow food, and some to act as intermediaries among these diverse producers."[741] In the context of Cuba, plantations permitting a diverse array of slave production opportunities were most commonly mixed-economy estates such as tobacco and coffee plantations. Moreno Fraginals and Rebecca Scott describe internal plantation exchanges in which the master assigned or allowed conucos from which slaves could not only feed themselves, but also raise surplus goods, often selling these back to the master.[742] Contemporary observers also described these kinds of economic activities. James O' Kelly witnessed a commercial transaction between a master and slave over the latter's pig, and Abiel Abbot described a plantation-owned store where the plantation's slaves were able to purchase goods with money they had earned.[743] Although off-plantation mobility was not necessary in these transactions, the ability to practice independent production, which did involve a considerable degree of mobility, was a necessary component for slaves to engage in this type of economic exchange.

For slaves with the necessary degree of mobility, these economic exchanges extended into neighboring plantations. The last chapter provided examples of slaves

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[740] Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 195.
[741] Ibid.
[742] Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill*, 100; Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 16.
[743] O'Kelly, *The Mambi-land, or, Adventures of a Herald Correspondent in Cuba.*, 59; Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 141.

crossing into and through adjoining vegas in Pinar del Río. The ability of slaves in this region to travel from one plantation slave community to another is indicated in the testimony of an individual vega owner in the province, Don Prato. Don Prato owned multiple vegas bordering, "*lindando*," the tobacco land of Don Francisco Diaz Cordova and the estate of Don Rodriquez. Don Prato's description of his land and that of his neighbors is one demonstration that multiple estates in this region were located adjacent to one another, reflecting the limited amount of land in the Vuelta Abajo and the resulting proximity of tobacco plantations.[744]

In 1843, the slave Antonio Carrabali took advantage of these geographic conditions to engage in marketing activities. Antonio, single and claimed by Don Antionio Begoña, was detained carrying a sack of meat that he was allegedly selling on the street. After investigating, officials determined that Antonio had conspired with another slave, Bernancio, to steal a pig from Bernancio's master, Don Juan Puentes. After advising Antonio to come to his house after his chores on Sunday where they would have "a meeting in the conuco that he had," Bernancio killed and butchered the stolen pig and gave the meat to Antonio, perhaps in trade. Upon questioning, the slaves said that they met in Bernancio's provision plot so he could mix his master's goods with his own to cover up the theft.[745] Although these undertakings were ultimately unsuccessful, officials were still concerned. It was clear that there was a relationship between slave mobility and the marketing of stolen goods, and that this relationship was enhanced by the close proximity of neighboring plantations. Officials particularly expressed concern about theft

744 "Expediente sobre memoria testamentario de Don Salvador Prato declarando sus bienes," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 13, exp. 46, 1847.
745 "Criminales formados contra un negro de Don Antionio Begoña por hurto de un cerdo," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 237, exp. 1437, 1843.

among slaves who were assigned to take care of animals and slaves with a large degree of mobility. As a specific example, Antonio and Bernancio demonstrate the capacity of two slaves from neighboring plantations to involve themselves in a series of economic activities that spanned estate and town surroundings. They were able to mix independent production with illicit undertakings for sale and profit. On a general level, this case also illustrates the connections between mobile slaves, close proximities, independent production, and marketing sites among the slave community of Pinar del Río.

Towns

Outside of the plantation, towns were significant resources for slaves' marketing activities. Towns were "central to this network – as sites of the main market, as the main source of demand for slaves' produce and as mercantile and financial centers."[746] Pinar del Río was conducive to slave mobility not only because of its labor regime, but also because its geography enabled marketing activities.[747] On a practical level, it is impossible to know just how much slaves in Pinar del Río took advantage of these urban networks to redistribute surplus staples, including livestock, raw tobacco leaf and handcrafted items. And although a detailed examination of urban centers in the province of Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century does not exist, secondary descriptions of local conditions make it clear that this area supported slaves' economic exchanges. Charlotte Cosner discusses the distances that individuals in the region could cover during the eighteenth century. She argues that the space between the individual villages of Pinar del Río "did not impede economic transactions between their residents," while Lowery

[746] Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands," 57.

[747] The labor demands of tobacco also facilitated the necessary time to trade goods in town. Writing about North American slaves, Walsh details the extent to which slaves, based upon the demands of their expected labor, were left time to peddle various goods and supplies in nearby towns. Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820."

Nelson maintains farmers in this area regularly came into town on a weekly and even daily basis.[748] Nelson is speaking about a significantly later period in Cuban history, but highlights Pinar del Río, saying that "frequent trips to town characterize especially the dairy section in Havana Province, the diversified farming area near Güines, and the tobacco region of Pinar del Río," with less frequent trips reported for major sugar and coffee regions.[749]

In relation to the ability of slaves to traverse these networks between urban sites and rural plantations in Pinar del Río, a 1837 report by Sociedad Patriótica on the state of the vegueros in Cuba also paid specific attention to Pinar del Río. It concluded that masters in the area had forbidden their slaves to act as independent marketers in urban areas "without consent of the slave's owner."[750] In other words, slaves were marketing goods in these locations both with and withou their master's permission. The geography of Pinar del Río enabled slaves from rural plantations to market goods in urban zones especially as the vegas' proximity to numerous coastlines and rivers provided considerable opportunity to market slave-produced wares. In 1855, José María de la Torre wrote that numerous vegas in Pinar del Río centered on multiple stopping points, with the "considerable trade" at these stopping points including steam traffic revolving around tobacco commerce.[751] As slaves routinely cultivated tobacco as part of their conuco possessions, some of the tobacco de la Torre described must have been

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[748] Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 117; Lowry Nelson, *Rural Cuba.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), 68.
[749] Nelson, *Rural Cuba.*, 68.
[750] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1837, 4:112.
[751] José María de la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies: Cuba and Porto Rico: Geographical, Political, and Industrial*, 1855, 74. For rivers of the Vuelta Abajo, see Guiteras, *Historia de la isla de Cuba*, 43.

independently produced by slaves and marketed through these established commercial networks linking the countryside to urban centers.

José Canela y Reventos also mentioned the considerable steam traffic for passengers and cargos in Pinar del Río, including weekly routes throughout the province. Another contemporary writer, José María de Andueza, described the commercial traffic originating in Havana that connected the ports in the Vuelta Abajo as "amazing."[752] Additionally, a Sociedad Patriótica report on the province of Pinar del Río remarked upon the "ease with which the inhabitants provide the necessary lines of subsistence" due to the well-supplied warehouses located on the banks of several large rivers in this area.[753]

Pinar del Río's substantial commercial traffic extended to the railroads. According to one account, the railroad was "equal to commercial maritime traffic" and allowed for "great profits" in the tobacco industry for people in this region. Another report portrays the extent of rail traffic in terms of commerce: in 1830-1831, the Vuelta Abajo shipped 60,000 cargas of tobacco, at a cost of 150,000 pesos.[754] Wherever a slave lived in Pinar del Río province the markets were there for trade with urban inhabitants, merchant sailors, and travelers; whether in food staples, raw tobacco or manufactured goods, including hand-rolled cigarettes.

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[752] José Canela y Reventos, *Esposición a la Real Junta de Fomento*, 1852, 4; José María de Andueza, *Isla de Cuba: pintoresca, histórica política, literaria, mercantil é industrial. Recuerdos, apuntes, impresiones de dos épocas* (Boix, 1841), 111.

[753] Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, 1838, 7:64.

[754] Reventos, *Esposición a la Real Junta de Fomento*, 5; Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica de la Habana*, vol. 4, 2, 1847, 268–270. This was in addition to 8,000 cattle, 25,000 pigs, 9,000 arrobas of wax, and two thousand merchants and litigants making multiple round trips to Havana. Ibid.

Taverns

Taverns served as another platform for slaves as marketers. Taverns offered substantial unrestricted movement and space where slaves utilizing conucos for surplus production could distribute their property. Numerous taverns were located at crossroads throughout the Cuban countryside, and these taverns were ready purchasers of slave-produced goods as well as retailers to meet slaves' needs. Taverns were a ubiquitous presence in rural areas, and with their unregulated space made them attractive to slaves in possession of excess material goods.[755] Nineteenth-century accounts reveal the presence and influence of these stores. One foreign traveler wrote of slaves selling their dinner to local tavern keepers, further stating that there were several of these stores in the vicinity, while one former slave suggested their presence was more pervasive "than ticks in the woods."[756] As outlets for marketing and trade, these spaces not only increased the choices available to slaves, but also maximized the value of slaves' material goods. In the exchanges taking place in Cuban taverns, provision plots transformed food into a marketable commodity that could be exchanged for other items, including non-food-based goods.[757] Additionally, taverns sold items not normally available to slaves, including alcoholic beverages.[758]

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[755] Despite their prevalence and the importance these sites had in informing the economic roles of Cuban slaves, very little has been written about them. Although fragmentary, two of the better analyses can be found in the following accounts: Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 80; García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 37.

[756] Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 27; Esteban Montejo, *Biografía De Un Cimarrón*, trans. Miguel Barnet (La Habana: Instituto de Ethnología y Folklore, 1966), 27.

[757] Marshall frames this advantage as having originated in the relationship between "slave supply and urban demand" which "stimulated commodity exchange and increased slaves' purchasing power." Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands," 56.

[758] Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 27; Montejo, *Biografía De Un Cimarrón*, 28. For the procurement of alcohol by slaves in taverns, see Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 80.

Taverns also allowed slaves to participate in leisure activities such as gambling and to engage in intimate and relatively free association with whites in a social setting.[759] In addition, merchants in these taverns sold "with an easy consciousness, the articles stolen from the estates" by slaves.[760] As a space for a variety of commodity transactions, taverns "also enabled the slaves to congregate somewhat more freely in centers where news as well as goods could be exchanged, and where a brief respite from the plantation regime might be enjoyed."[761] Taverns not only offered a market that was readily accessible to slaves with surplus goods and the ability to maneuver freely, but also one that cultivated their active participation.

Itinerant Traders

Beyond master-slave arrangements inside the confines of the plantation and rural taverns another outlet existed for economic exchanges concerning slaves in Cuba, itinerant traders who often acted as intermediaries in the marketing of goods for the slave community. Traveling in Cuba during the 1850s, Henry Murray remarked upon the phenomenon of "El Casero" or the "Parrish Peddler" who collected items that rural residents wished to sell, in exchange selling to them what they might need. Murray gave the example of one such trader "bargaining with a negress for fowls."[762] The historian

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[759] For a brief but insightful analysis on the role and presence of the tavern in the marketing activity of slaves, including a diverse demographic and the ability for slave to procure a multitude of goods, including weapons, see García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 37. For gambling and the co-mingling of groups in Cuban taverns, see Giovannetti, Jorge L. and Camillia Cowling, "Hard Work with the Mare Magnum of the Past: Nineteenth-Century Cuban History and the Miscelánea De Expedientes Collection," *Cuban Studies* 39 (2008): 71; Montejo, *Biografía De Un Cimarrón*, 28–29.

[760] Philalethes, *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba; or, The Men and Government, the Laws and Customs of Cuba, as Seen by American Eyes*, 27. It was this type of place that most likely received the two hundred pounds of tobacco, (a quantity that even on a large estate would be considered surplus and as stolen goods) slaves made off with in the middle of the night after digging under their master's floor. Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 232.

[761] Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 215.

[762] Murray, *Lands of the Slave and the Free*, 291.

Gloria García describes these traders as an "age-old institution, embedded in all parts of colonial society," a portrayal that is borne out by Abbot who added slaves who wish to sell pigs didn't even have to leave plantation because merchants came to the plantations to trade with them.[763] Maturin Ballou further stated that conucos made it possible for slaves to earn "good hard money" from merchants who would visit the plantation; he importantly added that many slaves would use this money to purchase their freedom.[764]

These transactions required slaves to have the time, energy, and mobility necessary to engage in independent production and complete these exchanges. As has been shown, these conditions flourished in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century, and as a consequence itinerant traders frequented this area. In Pinar del Río, the Monteros –the "yeomanry of Cuba"— often acted as "market-men for the cities in the immediate neighborhood of their homes."[765] One contemporary writer argued that it is "the tobacco country [that] is chiefly cultivated by Monteros," a description linking this group to the province of Pinar del Río.[766] Another nineteenth-century writer mentioned that another group in this region, the guajiros, frequently came to slave quarters to buy pigs.[767]

Numerous travelers commented on pigs as a component of the conuco system and as a primary good for trade. For the most part, these writers did not specify which parts of Cuba they were describing, but one traveler noted the prevalence in Pinar del Río of the "criollo or yard-hog"—a smaller pig that was wild and fed upon berries and acorns. The author, José María de la Torre, described this particular hog as having "exceedingly palatable" flesh and much-desired fat. He also argued that there is a distinct possibility

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763 García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 37; Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 97.
764 Ballou, *Due South; or Cuba Past and Present*, 301.
765 Ballou, *History of Cuba*, 141.
766 Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 160.
767 Montejo, *Biografía De Un Cimarrón*, 25.

that slaves routinely hunted these smaller animals for both food and the potential profit from rendering the animal fat.[768] Hunting and butchering these pigs and selling the surplus to traveling merchants was thus an additional economic outlet for slaves in this region.[769]

Additionally, itinerant peddlers were often receivers of stolen goods, and the slave Serino Breto most likely took advantage of this opportunity in his marketing activities. Breto, variously labeled throughout court proceedings as "negro, pardo, esclavo and chino," stole a quantity of tobacco and a new riding saddle "*sillia de montar*" from Don Simón Breto, his master.[770] The record does not say what Breto received in exchange for the tobacco, but does note that at the time of the proceedings, he was in possession of an old pack saddle "*albarda vieja*" that he did not previously own. More important than the goods Breto received was the fact that he was able to distribute the two stolen items through multiple avenues as the stolen goods were recovered in different areas. This network, in all likelihood facilitated by the ubiquitous peddler, suggests the existence of numerous and ready outlets that slaves could take advantage of to sell or exchange illicit goods. Breto was eventually caught and sentenced to several months in jail, but this did little to dissuade the slave from acquiring and trading stolen goods, as Breto was a repeat

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768 De la Torre, *The Spanish West Indies*, 36.

769 Simmonds also finds a corollary between theft of goods and the internal economy among Jamaican higglers, including theft from owners and the reselling to whites, free blacks, and other slaves. Simmonds, "Slave Higglering in Jamaica, 1780-1834.," 35. For an American corollary, see Loren Schweninger, "The Underside of Slavery: The Internal Economy, Self-hire, and Quasi-freedom in Virginia, 1780-1865," *Slavery & Abolition* 12, no. 2 (1991): 4.

770 Don Breto, described Serino variously, as either "my slave" or "my slave, the chino." "Expediente promovido por Don Simón Breto por el robo de un tercio de tabaco," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 237, exp. 1443, 1849. For example of a tobacco planter being assaulted and robbed on his own vega, see "Expediente criminal en averiguacion […] asaltaron y roban […] Don Capote,"ANC, ME, 645/Ar, 1868.

offender who, four years previously, had been caught and sentenced to six months in jail for stealing a pig.

For slaves who were able to produce goods independently, itinerant merchants provided a ready market. This was a primary means of exchange for slaves who had conucos but who lacked the mobility to seek out prohibited taverns. Berlin and Morgan argue that peddlers were "the most important trading partners for mainland slaves, purchasing their produce and selling them liquor and other contraband goods."[771] Essentially middlemen, these traders purchased slave-produced goods while also acting as retailers to slaves' needs, a connection that fully integrated Cuban slaves into the market economy.

Palenques

In Cuba, slaves had a place to distribute their goods that was not always available in other slave societies, notably the American South: runaway slave settlements. These established communities, known as palenques, maintained their own production systems that often overlapped with those of the slaves on nearby plantations. The renowned "Palenque of the Cristál" housed hundreds of runaways who had established an almost permanent free settlement, where among other things; they grew tobacco as a commodity of exchange for supplies that were otherwise unavailable to runaways.[772] Palanques created substantial exchange networks, as evidenced by Juan Pérez de la Riva, who argues the "Bumba" settlement transacted not only with nearby farms, but also with communities as far away as Santo Domingo and Jamaica.[773]

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[771] Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 33.
[772] Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 228.
[773] Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El Barracón: Esclavitud Y Capitalismo En Cuba* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1978).

The size of some palenques and the number and variety of goods procured by these runaway slave settlements are described in the diary of an individual hired to recapture runaway slaves. Operating in the 1830s and 1840s and around Pinar del Río, this slave catcher visited one settlement that had a variety of weapons, including guns with powder horns and ammunition that had been bought in a tavern. The slave catcher also found large quantities of manufactured cloth and "14 or 15 crates of plantains, pork and beef, 40 old blankets, much men's and women's clothing, an assortment of pots and kettles."[774] The historian Gabino La Rosa Corzo has also stressed the economic activity of these groups, focusing in upon their "bartering, and especially-stealing." Corzo highlights the numerous settlements in the western part of the island, including "several famous ones in the Vuelta Abajo" located next to the area's hills, caves and swamps.[775] This is a reminder of the ingenuity and resourcefulness of slaves, either within a palenque or on plantations, who acted as conduits for the reallocation of masters' property.[776] Moreover, palenques were most important to slaves with conuco sites. Conucos were often located on the margins of the plantation, so slaves who could move between these margins and the main housing sections of the plantation had enhanced opportunities for

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[774] Francisco Estévez and Cirilo Villaverde, Diario del rancheador, Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982, as quoted in Robert L Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 74.

[775] Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba: Resistance and Repression*, Envisioning Cuba (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 8. For an enumeration of goods in palenques, as evidenced by archeological remains, see Gabino La Rosa Corzo, "The Archaeology of Escaped Slaves," in *Beyond the Blockade: New Currents in Cuban Archaeology* (University Alabama Press, 2010), 126–142; Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Beyond the Blockade: New Currents in Cuban Archaeology*, ed. Susan Kepecs, L. Antonio Curet, and Gabino La Rosa Corzo (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2010).

[776] The complicity of certain segments in Cuban society in facilitating this activity is noted by Turnbull, who argues that the "keepers generally of hucksters shops and taverns, all over the country," frequently "teach, assist, and encourage" slaves in these particular activities. David Turnbull, *Travels in the West; Cuba, with Notices of Porto Rico, and the Slave Trade* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 310.

interaction with palenques or small bands of runaway slaves.[777] As a result, both groups of slaves—those attached to farms and those associated with palenques—were economic producers and marketers and certainly engaged in illicit trading of material goods, to the economic benefit of both groups.[778]

Concerning the importance of slaves as marketers, Marietta Morrissey in ranking the various ways that slaves exerted authority over resources by which provided the greatest "contribution to slaves' livelihoods"; she places the marketing of food plots near the top of the list.[779] One of the central ways that market participation affected the condition of enslavement was that it enabled slaves to take on new economic roles and new economic activities. By taking on these new roles and activities, slaves significantly expanded their physical world and material well-being. Based upon a foundation of independent production, slaves in Pinar del Río marketed surplus commodities in a multitude of arenas, many of which required unrestrained movement. Slaves in the Vuelta Abajo traded across vegas in the area; took advantage of urban and rural trading networks; and exchanged illegally and legally obtained resources in taverns, with peddlers, and with runaway slave settlements. Each of these opportunities was available to them because of the existence of conucos and the freedom of movement that their individual housing arrangements permitted. As a result, these slaves enlarged the world that confined them, and increased the autonomy available to them by participating in new

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[777] In a different context, Mullin suggests that in traveling to collect food, slaves certainly came across individuals or communities where "slaves cultivated the 'connexions' that crop up in so many advertisements as those who 'harboured' fugitives." Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 145. For illicit circuits of trade in these communities, see also Mintz, *From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean*, 6.

[778] Mintz, *From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean*, 6. For a larger discussion of palenques' proximity and relationship to nearby plantations, see Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (JHU Press, 1996), 1–33.

[779] Morrissey, *Slave Women in the New World*, 63.

roles as marketers. These new roles gave them new levels of choices: slaves decided what to grow, how much to grow, and when to grow it. These decisions pushed the options available for slaves beyond the essential decision of how to feed oneself or one's family. Despite the hierarchy inherent to any free-and-slave economic exchange, slaves, in exercising their choices, were able to act as controllers rather than as controlled. These exchanges thus fundamentally reconfigured the imposed inequity and subjugation of enslavement.[780]

Slaves as Consumer

Independent production and marketing enabled Cuban slaves to embrace another role: that of consumer. Like production and marketing, consumption was a critical component in mitigating the terms of enslavement. Perhaps no other component of participation in the internal economy allowed slaves to blur the line between slavery and freedom like occupying roles as consumers. Production and marketing were pathways to enhanced autonomy, but they were still dependent upon the very condition that defined slavery: labor. As consumers, slaves dramatically reversed traditional roles, transitioning from an imposed identity as laborer to a self-initiated persona defined by consumer habits and consumption preferences.

Behaviors of consumption among slaves can be found throughout different slave systems. Many historians describe slaves as "major consumers" and detail slaves' active participation in "conventional consumption patterns" as well as the considerable variety

[780] Mintz says that market activities allowed slaves "to change their standard of living, and to function-in this regard, at least-more like free men than the controllers of …the plantation system had ever intended at the outset." Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 215.

of goods that slaves consumed.[781] This also applies to Cuba. Although there are few extensive accounts of slave consumption; the ones that do exist portray remarkable degrees of material acquisition by slaves. In one of the more informative descriptions, Abiel Abbot noted that a particular planter went to the expense of creating an internal market on his plantation, including a store where slaves could purchase "everything they may wish to buy," including "cloth cheap and showy; garments gay and warm; crockery; beads; crosses," cooking utensils, and various other goods.[782] It is revealing that Abbot is describing consumption by slaves on a rural plantation rather than in an urban area. Maturin Ballou also stressed this feature of rural slave behavior; he remarked that ribbons and glass beads are "vastly prized by both sexes of the slaves in town and country."[783] Additional accounts are found in published works of the period. A slave narrative by Esteban Montejo explicitly linked consumption with independent production; Montejo said that when slaves had access to a conuco, they demonstrated clear consumer preferences, choosing new clothes and jewelry that were more pretty and stylish than what the plantation owner provided (or failed to provide).[784] The fictionalized account *Juanita*, published in the nineteenth century and based upon the author's observations in 1830, told of two slaves who had purchased clothes, rings, dresses, and other trinkets.[785]

These accounts suggest that plantation slaves were fully integrated into the Cuban countryside's market economy. However, beyond these examples, very few accounts of

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[781] For descriptions of slaves as consumers, see Simmonds, "Slave Higglering in Jamaica, 1780-1834.," 36. For degree of consumption patterns, see Mintz, *From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean*, 7. For the variety of goods consumed, see Berlin and Morgan, *Cultivation and Culture*, 33.

[782] Abbot, *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba*, 141.

[783] Ballou, *History of Cuba*, 194.

[784] Montejo, *Biografía De Un Cimarrón*, 24.

[785] It is noteworthy that the slaves bought some of these articles from itinerant peddlers. Mary Tyler Peabody Mann and Patricia M. Ard, *Juanita: A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*, 1887, 77–78. As citied in Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads."

Cuban slaves as consumers exist, although historians are beginning to fill this gap. Aisha Finch, in her analysis of slave rebellions in Cuba, provides an interesting discussion of slaves' ownership of substantial munitions, including gunpowder, guns, and swords.[786] That these were forbidden items underlines the extent of what was possible for slaves to "consume" on Cuba's rural estates.

Archeologists have also uncovered some of the material goods owned by slaves. These scholars have built upon the supposition by historians that "slave property began with the acquisition of a provision ground" and the idea that although the quality of "available evidence makes it difficult to assess the slaves' material gains from provision grounds," these goods were notable if not substantial.[787] Theresa Singleton is at the forefront of Cuban scholarship on the consumption habits of rural slaves. In a virtually unprecedented study, Singleton's analysis of the remains of a Cuban cafetal strikingly reveals both the quantity and quality of goods possessed by Cuban slaves in the nineteenth century. On the cafetal del Padre, Singleton uncovers artifacts similar to those throughout slave communities in the Americas, including "British refined earthenwares, primarily pearl-wares and white-wares" as the most common table items.[788] With this discovery, Singleton more fully integrates the Cuban slave experience with that of societies whose slaves owned expansive property. Singleton's excavations also included decorated wares from Europe as well as multiple earthernwares designed for cooking and storage purposes, "of varying sizes and shapes, some glazed and others unglazed," but all

[786] Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 242–290.
[787] Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 140; Marshall, "Provision Ground and Plantation Labour in Four Windward Islands," 58.
[788] Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations," 109.

manufactured and not handmade.[789] Finally, Singleton found among the ruins "glass beads, iron-kettle fragments and stub-stem pipes of Spanish manufacture" as well as a ceramic disk believed to be used for religious purposes.[790] In this remarkable find, Singleton demonstrates the large degree to which slaves were able to acquire goods; she also demonstrates the quality of goods circulating around slave communities and that most of these goods had been manufactured. The number and quality of goods suggests a prolific market, and this market relied on an internal economy that allowed goods to circulate and granted slaves the purchasing or trading power necessary to acquire them.

Singleton's work describes cafetales, and there has been no similar work to describe slave possessions on vegas in the Vuelta Abajo. However, there are overlapping conditions between Cuban cafetales and vegas that suggest similar circumstances in the acquisition of material goods, especially as tobacco plantations certainly provided slaves with the means to produce goods, including food staples, livestock, and tobacco. Tobacco slaves also had access to a variety of means of marketing their goods, while production and marketing activities generated consumption opportunities for slaves in the Vuelta Abajo. Morevoer, scholars have shown a clear division in the degree of economic activity by slaves between plantations that allowed for independent production and those that did not: the latter demonstrated "material impoverishment," while the former displayed greater material acquisition.[791] Singleton's excavations centered on goods found in slave bohíos, and tobacco-based slaves were predominately housed in these types of independent housing arrangements. As a result, the ability of slaves to possess and store

[789] Ibid.
[790] Ibid., 109–110.
[791] Mullin, *Africa in America Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, 137–138.

goods that they had produced themselves or acquired through market exchange is directly linked to the configuration of tobacco cultivation, specifically in the distinct configuration of the bohío used on vegas.

Evidence from vega dotaciones throughout Pinar del Río reaffirms the influence that housing had upon slaves' ability to act as consumers and accumulate private property. In the example at the beginning of this chapter, the tobacco-based slaves Cristobal and Teresa filed a complaint about the theft of belongings from their bohío, including a variety of clothes and money that they kept in a secured storage unit.[792] Although this bohío proved impossible to completely secure, it nevertheless facilitated the storing of obtained goods by providing some measure of protection. Another example of slave property ownership connected with tobacco cultivation and (tobacco) wealth is provided by Francisco Madera. Madera, a single, Cuban-born slave, lived in the province of Pinar del Río. In 1872, Madera left behind an estate that included a pair of oxen, nine pigs, and papers concerning a harvest of at least fifty boxes of tobacco.[793] The example of Francisco Madera demonstrates the considerable degree to which slaves in the Vuelta Abajo could acquire personal property. Madera's estate was not composed of just trinkets or jewelry or even manufactured earthernwares, but rather property of sizable value, including livestock and a tobacco harvest that he could use to accumulate additional material goods.

In the material possession by slaves in Pinar del Río, Madera's case was not exceptional. In 1856, the slave Salome, resident of San Cristóbal, attempted to exchange

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792 "Expediente sobre autos criminales promovido por los esclavos Carabalies Cristobal y Teresa," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 1045, exp. 6422, 1859.

793 "Expediente sobre diligencia por intestado del negro esclavo Francisco M….," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 359, exp. 2183, 1872.

numerous animals valued at 460 pesos for her liberty.[794] Slaves investments in livestock could extend to large animals: In 1861, Antonio, slave of Don Luis Pedrozo, entered the historical record upon filing criminal proceedings for the theft of his horse, which he had left tied up on a farm in San Cristóbal.[795] Antonio later saw this horse on a vega belonging to Don Antonio Garcia, and he charged the rural guard with locating his horse and the person who had stolen it.[796] As an additional example of slaves who owned property in Pinar del Río, criminal charges were filed against two Chinese tobacco laborers who were caught with a loaded pistol and knife and who, according to several witnesses, wanted to use these weapons to rob slaves attending a nighttime dance in a partido in Pinar del Río.[797] The citation of numerous slaves possessing property indicates how widespread property ownership was among slaves in this area as well authorities' acknowledgement and acceptance of this activity.

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794 "Don José Rivera reclamando la propiedad de la negra Salome Criollo," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 1052, exp. 6252, 1856.

795 "Criminales por hurto de un caballo del negro Antonio Criollo," AHPPR, IJC, leg, 1075, exp. 6423, 1861. More often, slaves, rather than having large animals stolen, were implicated in their theft. For examples of slaves stealing horses, see "Expediente promovido por Don Quirino Rejas contra los negros Fernando y Cayetano criollos," AHPPR, IJC, leg, 1077, exp. 6426, 1871; "Expediente sobre autos criminales seguida contra el negro esclave Rafael Criollo," AHPPR, IJC, leg, 1077, exp. 6427, 1868. In both cases, the slaves had been accused of stealing a horse from a different master.

796 For other examples of slaves owning horses, see Manuel Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 169, fn. 54; Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 222.

797 "Expediente sobre autos criminales [ ] contra el chino Julían Hernández y el [chino] Tomas Alvarez, como sospechosos de un hurto […] baile," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 267, exp. 1578, 1854. On the occurrence of Chinese labor, "Colonos Asiáticos," in tobacco estates in Pinar del Río, there is very little information. However, official statistics do list specific numbers. In 1860 there were 416 in Pinar del Río and 216 in San Cristóbal. In 1862 the census lists 790 in Pinar del Río and 231 in San Cristóbal. Jacobo de la Pezuela specifically lists 6 (out of 7) on vegas in the jurisdiction of Pinar del Río.Félix Erenchun, *Anales De La Isla De Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Economico, Estadistico y Legislativo. Año De 1855*, vol. 4 (Imprenta La Antilla, 1861), 2263; José Frías, *Noticias Estadisticas De La Isla De Cuba, En 1862.* (Habana: Imprenta del gobierno, 1864), 13; Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico De La Isla De Cuba*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Impr. del establecimiento de Mellado, 1866), 215. For an overview of this group, see Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Temple University Press, 2008); Benjamin Nicolas Narvaez, "Chinese Coolies in Cuba and Peru: Race, Labor, and Immigration, 1839-1886" (University of Texas, 2010).

The example of the slave María del Pilar further demonstrates that property ownership by slaves was sanctioned under the Cuban legal system. Del Pilar's case presents an interesting example of the larger social and legal acceptance and even protection of the slaves' economy. In 1850, María del Pilar, an unmarried slave from Africa, age 24 and in the service of Don Ramón Ramirez, was assaulted and robbed at night by two brothers, Don José and Don Andrés Acosta.[798] The assault and robbery occurred outside the store of Don Pedro Prato, but the historical record does not indicate the reasons for the attack nor the property that the brothers stole. However, several witnesses testified to the brothers "enjoying very bad behavior" and that María had permission to sell a cow at some point, potentially at Don Prato's store, as this was a central meeting place for the community. The end result of the case, a sentence of two years in jail for each of the brothers, indicates considerable protection of slave property under the law during this period.

Contrary to traditional understanding of the Cuban slave experience in rural areas, slaves in Pinar del Río owned considerable material property. Their labor regime permitted independent production, and slaves took advantage of their mobility and autonomous housing to act as consumers and accumulate personal property. Slaves invested in livestock, household goods and manufactured personal items, and even tobacco. Their economic roles as consumers allowed them to exercise considerable control over their material conditions: they decided what to accumulate and determined their own reasons for accumulating a particular range of goods. As a result, the practice

[798] "Expediente sobre autos promovides contra Don José Acosta y Don Andrés del mismo apellido por asalto y robo de la negra María del [ ] Pilar esclava de Don Ramón Ramirez," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 256, exp. 1531, 1850.

of tobacco slavery in Cuba facilitated enhanced opportunities for a more independent slave experience.

TOBACCO AND FREEDOM: COARTACIÓN

As this chapter has shown, Cuban tobacco slaves actively participated in an informal economy as independent producers, marketers, and as consumers. Cuban slaves were also conspicuously involved in Cuba's formal economy - as participants in the legally recognized economic transaction of coartación, or self-purchase.[799] Coartación was one of the defining features of Cuban slavery, and its importance for the island's slave community is difficult to overestimate. This legal right allowed slaves to initiate the transition towards freedom with an intial and partial payment to their master, the amount of which was usually influenced by the overall value attached to the slave and was agreed upon by both parties. Associated with this process of self-purchase were additional rights granted to the coartado, including that if the slave was sold to another person, his status as a coartado must be recognized, and he could not be sold to another master at a price higher than the original price agreed upon. Moreover, the coartado could live and work on his own after the first payment, and the payment price was fixed, so that after a period of installments, the slave could obtain his or her freedom.

Despite the important implications of coartación for Cuba's slave community, scholars have questioned both the frequency with which slaves entered into coartación and the impact that this status had upon slaves. The historian Manuel Barcia has remarked that works on "manumission and coartación in Cuba are not plentiful" and that

[799] The two best accounts of coartación can be found in Hubert Aimes, "Coartación: A Spanish Institution for the Advancement of Slaves into Freedmen," *The Yale Law Review* 17 (1909); Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122–142.

"little is known about the use of manumission and coartación by rural slaves before 1860."[800] This corresponds to Rebecca Scott's assessment of the limited numbers of slaves listed as coartados—fewer than 2,000 per year—although her sample only included the years, 1858-1862.[801] According to the best numerical study of coartación, coartados represented 13 percent of slave sales, although in a different calculation, this study suggests that the number could have been as high as 26 percent.[802] As a summary, Laird Bergad notes that while coartación was an important characteristic of Cuban slavery, avenues for self-purchase were "beyond the realm of real possibility for most slaves" because access to cash was limited and the structure of most slave regimes severely constrained independent activity.[803]

However, newer studies are attempting to contextualize both the numbers of slaves that initiated coartación and the value of this pathway to self-purchase. William Van Norman argues that while the numbers of coartados are "limited," many slaves initiated coartación but never completed the process to achieve freedom.[804] Additionally, Jose Ortega addresses the inherent limitations in accurately interpreting both the numbers of coartados and how the process worked. Ortega argues that many slaves entered into coartación agreements with their masters informally, or at least without undergoing the full legal process, while those that did initiate formal and legal proceedings were often misclassified. He also argues that while the law determined some rights and obligations associated with coartación, much was left to be determined on an individual level between master and slave. As a result, the process was "subject to interpretation,

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800 Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*, 95.
801 Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 14.
802 Bergad, Iglesias García, and Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*, 123, 128.
803 Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 82.
804 Van Norman, "Shade-grown Slavery," 193.

negotiation, and abuse" and depended on the relationship between the master and the slave that initiated the coartación.[805]

Yet coartación remains one of the principal conditions that structured the life of Cuban slaves. The most salient aspect of coartación is not the ability of slaves to initiate the process or the numbers of who did so, but rather the life-altering implications of the process.[806] Just as it is difficult to delineate where and how Cuban slaves' informal economy existed, it is difficult to get a firm grasp on the institution of coartación. As a result, coartación must be analyzed wherever and however it occurs. In the case of Pinar del Río, although there has not been a quantitative study of coartación on a provincial level, individual examples demonstrate the occurrence of self-purchase and illustrate the importance that coartación held for the slave community.

One of the more detailed accounts of coartación among slaves in Pinar del Río stems from criminal charges that Cristobal and Teresa Carabali filed in relation to the theft of their property.[807] Among the various material goods stolen was the official document declaring Teresa's status as a coartado. In addition to the theft of the couple's possessions, other items were also stolen, including three doubloons belonging to a former slave named Ramon Costa. In this official proceeding, Cristobal stated that Costa had given this money to Teresa to guard. Additionally, Teresa testified that Costa also had given her his liberty card to similarly safeguard, a fact that Costa himself later

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805 Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 227.

806 An effective statement in relation to how contemporary officials felt about the value in coartación to slaves is provided by Gloria García, who cites one official who noted that when a slave made a down payment, the slave then "has power over himself." García, *La Esclavitud Desde La Esclavitud*, 43. Jose Ortega offers a similar assessment, maintaining that coartados "did not perceive themselves as slaves and demanded that their masters acknowledge this sentiment." Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 225.

807 "Expediente sobre autos criminales promovido por los esclavos Carabalies Cristobal y Teresa," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 1045, exp. 6422, 1859.

verified in the court record. The rationale behind Costa's decision to leave such valuable property as money and freedom papers with another slave remains hidden. However, this case demonstrates not only the reality of coartación among Pinar del Río slaves, but also the relationships that coartado status could engender across the spectrum of Cuban slavery as Teresa Carabali was intimately linked with the former slave Ramon Costa through the process of coartación.

The link that coartación could create between slaves in this community can also be seen in the example of the former slave Maria de la Trinidad. In judicial proceedings, Maria, a tobacco famer in Pinar del Río, enumerated among her goods a debt owed to her from Anastacio Crespo. Amounting to seven ounces of gold, this money was, according to Maria, specifically "lent for help with his freedom." Because Crespo was listed as a free black in the court records, and not as either a slave or coartado, which suggests that he had in fact achieved his freedom; his case represents the successful transition from slavery to freedom within Cuba's tobacco economy. Although coartación was theoretically possible for slaves in all areas of Cuba and in all economies, Anastacio Crespo's pathway to freedom was directly related to tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río. It was the wealth that Maria had obtained as a result of the tobacco economy that facilitated Crespo's freedom.

In fact, the cultivation of tobacco allowed former slaves to help secure freedom for other slaves under coartación. This was because tobacco was exceptionally suited for small scale-production, with little overhead, yet high profit margins. For example, in 1856, Juana Ramos, a former slave, bequeathed in her will 150 pesos to her slave Ramona, on the grounds of the latter's "good service, happiness and affection." Juana Ramos presented this gift to Ramona "happily," while specifically stating that it was for

the initiation of the latter's coartación. While beyond the stated reason of good service the record does not allow for why Ramona among all other slaves owned by Juana Ramos was distinguished by the granting of money for her freedom (although their proximity in age and their shared listed origins of "Caraballi" provides some rationale) - how Juana Ramos was able to afford this gift is directly identified by her status as a vega owner and wealth from tobacco production in Pinar del Río.[808]

The connection between tobacco and freedom can be seen on a more immediate level in two final examples of slaves who obtained their freedom through resources derived from personal tobacco production. In the first case, in 1873, the African-born slave Maria del Rosario Lucumi had arranged with her master, Don Mauricio Lago, a change in her status. This new status resulted from an agreement between the two for Maria to enter into coartación. After receiving Maria's intial freedom payment, Don Lago, a veguero in Consolación del Sur, permitted Maria to work her own tobacco lands on his estate and to keep any profit she was able to make through this enterprise. Maria, working for wages on her own time, eventually convinced Don Lago to give her the final letter of freedom, *carta de libertad*, in exchange for 700 pesos. The legal acknowledgment of this transaction depended upon Maria submitting 500 pesos to her owner immediately, with the remainder to be sent within the next year. According to their agreement, Don Lago would give his consent for the síndico, the official charged with overseeing the legal rights of slaves, to officially release Maria's liberty card, as the síndico officially held the paperwork in his deposit. For Maria, who was eventually able to secure her freedom, the pathway from slavery to freedom depended upon tobacco,

808 "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de la parda libra Juana Ramos en la que lega tierras, [ ], esclavos, y otros bienes a sus herederos." 1856, AHPPR, IJC, leg. 14, exp. 50.

which allowed her the means to acquire the income and savings necessary to purchase her freedom.[809]

The slave Francisco Madera's transition into freedom was similar to Maria's circumstances. A resident of Pinar del Río, Madera entered the historical record in the same period as Maria, although in a different manner: Madera's master was charged with identifying and distributing Madera's property upon the latter's death in 1872. Because Madera lacked any direct heirs, his master, Don Leando Mendes, recorded an inventory of Madera's possessions. Madera's possessions primarily related to tobacco farming, and the list included tobacco for sale and farm animals used expressly for tobacco cultivation. In the court record, Don Mendes noted that his slave had "fixed" his home away from his master's and stipulated that Madera was a coartado. Although Madera quite possibly never obtained his full freedom, his example nevertheless demonstrates the role of tobacco in coartación. As a slave veguero, Madera not only was capable of accumulating valuable goods, but also managed to secure a livelihood that enabled him to make continuous freedom payments to his master and establish physical independence in the form of a separate habitation away from the purview of Don Mendes.[810]

Slave-Grown Tobacco for Profit

Just as tobacco production created the conditions for slaves to act as producers, marketers, and consumers in the Vuelta Abajo, it also created the conditions for slaves in this area to obtain freedom. According to the nineteenth-century traveler John Taylor, tobacco's low startup costs, ease of production, and marketability enabled slaves to

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[809] "Diligencias promovidos por la morena Maria del Rosario Lucumi," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 507, exp.3303, 1873.
[810] "Expediente sobre diligencia por intestado del negro esclavo Francisco M….," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 359, exp. 2183, 1872.

cultivate it to earn money for self-purchase. In 1851, Taylor proposed a transitional path towards abolition that had, as one of its bases, tobacco cultivation as primary means by which slaves could procure their freedom.

According to Taylor, the owner of a Cuban plantation could grant a portion of land to each slave, as well as four days a week of freedom to work this parcel of land. In exchange, the slave would pay the master a percentage of the slave's worth every year and work for the master three days per week. Taylor went on to say that with foresight, the planter could maintain a constant work crew by dividing his laborers into two groups: one group would work the first three days of the week, and the other, the last three days. Taylor expected the slaves to turn their land allotment "into tobacco gardens and provision grounds"; these would be their cash crops, and therefore, their principal resources for obtaining the money with which to "rent" their freedom.[811]

Taylor's rationale for this proposal is grounded in the unique economy of tobacco production; low startup costs, relatively ease of labor, and profit per acre. These qualities made tobacco a principal component of slaves' provision grounds and made it an ideal economic pursuit to facilitate the transition from slavery to freedom.[812] It is not initially

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811 Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 206.

812 Taylor was not the only person to propose such a method in the exchange of enslaved workers for free laborers using tobacco as an integral part of subsidizing the associated costs. The nineteenth century Russian historian and traveler Igor Sivers, who had previously noted the commonality of property ownership and access to money among Cuban slaves, believed that slaves in Cuba both needed and should be granted their freedom, yet in order for this to occur, it was necessary to give them instruction first, as Sivers considered it in bad form to offer liberty to those that did not know how to use it. As a means to enable this, Sivers proposed a method by which slaves would be assigned a section of land and laws would be established to ensure continual usage in usufruct. As cited in Lukín, "Viajes De Rusia a Cuba a Mediados Del Siglo XIX," 87. Another nineteenth-century plan to facilitate gradual emancipation was identified by Carlos de Sedano Cruzat and Antonio Romero Ortiz. The authors, reporting on a discussion of emancipation by Don Francisco Montaos in 1865, outlined a plan that explicitly linked coartación with the existence of provision plots. Under this plan, the authors suggested money for self-purchase by slaves could be obtained "from the harvest of their conuco." Carlos de Sedano y Cruzat and Antonio Romero Ortiz, *Cuba: estudios políticos* (Impr. á cargo de M.G. Hernández, 1872), 271.

clear whether Taylor was suggesting that the slaves residing upon these estates would initiate a full process of emancipation or whether he expected them to make a simpler exchange of partial freedom for a semi-free status. However, Taylor went on to link his proposal with that of the Cuban tradition of coartación. Taylor promoted his version as an augmentation of that system and explicitly recommended the allocation of land and labor for tobacco cultivation as a central component in facilitating coartación. Citing a first-hand example, Taylor described a planter who had placed on one end of his plantation "a considerable number of free negroes and mulattoes, to whom he let out tobacco gardens" from which they paid a rent in kind with tobacco or if the planter so desired, an exchange of labor rather than a quantity of tobacco.[813]

In 1839, the Sociedad Patriótica also addressed the practicality of using independent production as a central component of paying or subsidizing the labor force on Cuban estates. This report discussed plans concerning the building and operation of a new ingenio using only white laborers. Part of this plan called for allocating a caballería of land for "conuco cultivation." Because tobacco was considered to be one of the most profitable crops, half the land would be devoted to its production, with each of the laborers, *jornaleros*, comfortably planting 4,000 plants for a total of 240,000 tobacco plants. As this number of plants is less than half of the normal amount of tobacco plants per caballería (approximately 550,000), a surplus of land was available for additional conuco-based production, including a proposed allocation of silkworms, pigs, chickens, and ducks. According to the report, the success of an enterprise based upon conuco

[813] Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, 195. There is a corollary to Taylor's proposal that is directly attached to a vega in Pinar del Río. Don Hernandez, an important tobacco farmer in Pinar del Río, reserved a caballería of land for local free laborers to rent for cultivation purposes. In this estate, free blacks did not even have to own their own land; instead, they were afforded a means to grow tobacco while minimizing the intial purchase costs of land. "Expediente sobre memoria testamentaria de Don Andrés José Hernandez," AHPPR, IJC, leg.109, exp. 513, 1853.

production by free workers was ensured due to the profits that the laborers would gain from selling the products of the conuco production.[814]

Although this example and Taylor's example address independent tobacco production for free workers, the crop's viability for small-scale production made it valuable for both free laborers and slaves.[815] Tobacco was the most effective means by which Cuban slaves could obtain freedom. Several examples from Pinar del Río demonstrate that tobacco was a principal catalyst for slaves to transition from enslavement to freedom. In 1839, court records listed the estate of the former slave Agustin Morera.[816] According to this record, Morera, originally from Africa, had married another slave, Maria de la Ascencia Martinez, also from Africa, and over a period of years managed to procure both his freedom and that of his wife.[817] In addition, Morera had amassed some property, including a dwelling house, a pair of oxen, and a milk cow. But the bulk of his wealth was attached to tobacco: he owned a vega that bordered the area of La Sabina, near San Juan y Martínez, that was approximately one caballería and was valued at 350 pesos. Morera also owned a tobacco shed and a quantity of tobacco valued at 472 pesos. Agustin Morera and Maria de la Ascencia Martinez were former

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814 Real Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana, *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriotica de La Habana*, vol. 9 (Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1839), 277–279.

815 Lorena Walsh maintains that tobacco is "the optimal poor man's crop" and that it "offered the best chance to make an independent living." Walsh, "Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820.," 199.

816 "Expediente sobre autos de intestado del moreno libre Agustin Morera promovidos para formar inventario de los bienes los cuales son: una vega, [ ] animales, [ ]." 1839-1841,AHPPR, IJC, leg. 127, exp. 571.

817 Agustin Morera was listed as of the nation "Congo" Maria de la Ascencia Martinez as of the nation "Carrabali."

slaves who had either found a way out of slavery through a tobacco based economy or at least found economic security through this particular crop.[818]

Ignacio Valdés was another former slave from Africa who also found a pathway to freedom through tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río. Living on a cafetal in Guanajay, Ignacio Valdés, age 60 and single, took an inventory of his goods. These included a pair of oxen, one mare, a pig, and three bohíos, with the largest containing a quantity of picked and hung tobacco that had not yet dried. This green tobacco that Valdés was preparing for sale was in addition to the 1,500 tobacco plants that Valdés owned. The valuation of the tobacco, at 45 pesos, did not specify which product it covered—the plants or the dried leaves. But Valdés listed the figure of 45 pesos' worth of tobacco above the combined value of his dwellings, which was 35 pesos.[819] Tobacco cultivation represented a substantial portion of Ignacio Valdés's overall wealth, and it was most likely the method by which he had achieved freedom.

The example of the former slave Maria de la Trinidad's involvement in the *coartación* of another former slave has been previously discussed. However, it is worth noting how Maria obtained her own freedom. Less than ten years after achieving her freedom in 1830, she had accumulated a sizable tobacco-based estate, complete with a vega, casa de tabaco, five slaves, and multiple bohíos for their housing. Additionally, Maria owned various animals, including horses, oxen, and pigs, as well as a large

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[818] Charlotte Cosner is the only other scholar to address the role that slaves played in independently growing tobacco for profit. Her important work significantly expands the understanding of who the Cuban veguero was by incorporating slaves into this class. Cosner, "Rich and Poor, White and Black, Free and Slave," 86–96.

[819] "Expediente sobre intestado del moreno libre Ignacio Valdés, promovido para inventario sus bienes compuestos por tres bohios y algunos animales."1873, AHPPR, IJC, leg. 80, exp. 383. For another example of a free black leaving a quantity of tobacco for his heirs to continue his farm, see "Expediente de autos de intestado del negro José Martínez Brave," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 349, exp. 2080, 1859-1870. .

quantity of corn and bananas grown throughout her vega.[820] Although this farm constituted a diverse array of subsistence production and activities, tobacco was its central crop and main generator of income. Tobacco's importance to Maria de la Trinidad cannot be undervalued, as this was the principal means by which the former slave elevated her condition from servitude to freedom.

The role of tobacco cultivation and its value to former slaves is also seen in the example of Nicolas Lucumí. Although the court record is especially ambivalent in this particular proceeding, it is clear that Nicolas, an African-born slave, repeatedly sought legal action to obtain freedom from his owner, Don Pedro Gorin. He involved a síndico before eventually being able to get the payment for coartación. After paying a down payment for his self-purchase, Nicolas left the rural estate of Don Gorin and found employment in a building and navigation company, "*empresa de fomento y navegacion*."[821] But disputes between Nicolas and Don Gorin continued, most likely related to negotiations over payments for Nicholas's freedom. Eventually, representatives of Nicolas's new company, Don Manuel Calvo and Don Ramón G […] sued Don Gorin for four hundred and fourteen pesos, six and a half reales. This sum, they argued, was provided by Nicolas, from his savings, "*de sus ahorros,*" to buy his freedom. Don Gorin responded by offering to substitute 600 bundles of tobacco, which was deemed to have a corresponding value, to discharge his debt. While it is unclear why Don Gorin would owe

820 "Expediente sobre autos testamentarios de la Morena Libre Maria de la Trinidad donde se cita a los herederos para el [ ] de bienes tales como una vega animales, esclavos (etc)." 1838-1841, AHPPR, IJC, leg. 135, exp. 660. See also the case of Juan de Dios Diaz, a former slave whose primary property consisted of tobacco plants and other mixed subsistence economies. "Expediente sobre autos de intestado al intestado del negro libre Juan de Dios Diaz para que se le haga entrega de los bienes [ ] los herederos." 1844, AHPPR, IJC, leg. 135, exp. 662.

821 "Expediente sobre autos promovidos por Manuel Calvo y Don Ramón Guad[ ] en representación de su esclavo Nicolas Lucumí," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 529, exp. 3375, 1857.

money, including interest, to a former slave, it is important that the slave had accumulated such substantial savings, most likely as a result of his work in the warehouse of the company. Additionally, while this particular slave's savings were not related directly to tobacco production, it appears that Nicolas was willing to take the harvested tobacco in exchange, perhaps wagering on the fact that he could possibly increase his wealth by reselling this tobacco. While the previous examples highlighted the practicality of tobacco, especially its low intial costs and simple labor requirement, in helping slaves achieve freedom, the example of Nicolas speaks to the facility with which tobacco could be marketed and the profits attached to it – attributes that slaves attempting to use tobacco as a method of self-purchase would have found appealing.

Hiring Out

Tobacco's reduced labor requirements, the surfeit time it allowed slaves, and tobacco slaves' enhanced mobility also enabled slaves to hire themselves out for pay or have their masters hire them out in exchange for some form of payment. Hiring out was common in the Cuban countryside: Aisha Finch cites a local official who claimed that "slaves go…working throughout the countryside for themselves, as if they were free, and outside of the sovereign authority, with only the papers of their owners."[822] Hiring out was not only a common practice, but also a significant one: it provided both income and also increased autonomy, or the opportunity to act "free" – which was the official's pressing concern.

While the historian Laird Bergad argues that hiring out could "generate substantial income", contemporary accounts reveal just how tangible the benefits of this

[822] Finch, "Insurgency at the Crossroads," 84.

system were for slaves.[823] The nineteenth-century writer Maturin Ballou spoke to the possibility of self-purchase, which "an industrious slave can accomplish at farthest in seven years," while his contemporary, Carlo Barinetti suggested that slaves in the rural parts of Cuba could, if they were industrious, earn enough money to free themselves in just a few short years.[824] Two nineteenth-century Russian travelers to Cuba confirmed the commonality of slaves for hire in Cuba and the close link between slave wages and freedom. W. F. Karwinski argued that it was cheaper to hire a slave than a horse for a day, as the former, at three pesos, was almost three times less expensive than the latter. Igor Sivers contended that by hiring themselves out, slaves were frequently able to purchase their freedom in just three years.[825]

Yet, not every slave possessed the same opportunity for freedom. In the rural estates of Cuba, the ability to work for wages varied according to specific economic priorities and the autonomy granted to slave dotaciones within each agricultural economy. This largely corresponded to planter needs, the time required to cultivate the primary crop, and slaves' ability to leave their plantation. A manual devoted to the practice of sugar cultivation discouraged the practice of hiring out slaves, arguing that it was uneconomical for the planter.[826] Additionally, the nineteenth century writer Robert Jameson contended that slaves on ingenios and cafetales were "debarred from the advantages of extra labour, or a charge of service," principally because of the rigid nature

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[823] Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 108.
[824] Ballou, *History of Cuba*, 183; Carlo Barinetti, *A Voyage to Mexico and Havanna: Including Some General Observations on the United States* (Printed for the author by C. Vinton, 1841), 135.
[825] Lukín, "Viajes De Rusia a Cuba a Mediados Del Siglo XIX," 68, 86.
[826] *Cartilla practica del manejo de ingenios ó fincas destinadas á producir azúcar.* (Irun: Impr. de la Elegancia, 1862), 94.

of slave management and labor expectations in these economies.[827] The historian Jose Ortega also mentions mobility was a central component in the procuring of contacts and the ability to make payments to initiate the coartación process. Yet Ortega also notes that the majority of slaves working on sugar plantations "possessed little hope of achieving coartado status."[828]

In tobacco cultivation, less than half the year was devoted to planting and harvesting tobacco, and there were periods of light activity throughout the agricultural season. In this context, slaves had time and opportunity to work for wages.[829] The historian Vicent Sanz provides an example: in 1818, José García, a tobacco famer on the outskirts of Pinar del Río province, owned half a caballería of land and five slaves, yet found it necessary to hire out his slaves to labor in other pursuits.[830]

Other archival examples also testify to the practice of tobacco-based slaves being hired out for wages and the potential for this process to generate important income for slaves in the area of Pinar del Río. In 1829, Don Jose Peralta filed suit against Don Acando, both residents of Pinar del Río province, for failing to deliver a slave that Don Acando had sold to Don Peralta, but had not yet surrendered. Don Acando had rented out this slave to another person and was continuing to receive a portion of his wages, despite the fact that Don Peralta had purchased him. Therefore, Don Peralta was suing not only

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827 Robert Francis Jameson, *Letters from the Havana, During the Year 1820; Containing an Account of the Present State of the Island of Cuba, and Observations on the Slave Trade* (London: Printed for J. Miller, 1821), 45.

828 Ortega, "The Cuban Sugar Complex in the Age of Revolution, 1789--1844," 224.

829 For the agricultural cycle, see Sagra, *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1:292. For vega labor requirements, see Rodríguez-Ferrer, *El Tabaco Habano Su Historia, Su Cultivo Sus Vicisitudes, Sus Mas Afamadas Vegas En Cuba ...*

830 Vicent Sanz Rozalén, "Los Negros Del Rey. Tabaco Y Esclavitude En Cuba A Comienzos Del Siglo XIX," in *Trabajo Libre y Coactivo En Sociedades De Plantación*, ed. José Antonio Piqueras (Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2009), 172.

to acquire the slave that he had legally bought, but also for the slave's "*jornales,*" wages, that Don Acando had received during this period and which Don Acando "had maintained in secret." The slave, despite having been sold to another planter, continued to be hired out and continued to receive a portion of that income. For the unnamed slave, hiring out represented an opportunity to earn money that may not have been guaranteed under his new master, Don Peralta.[831]

The following example illustrates how the structure of tobacco labor enabled the hiring out of slaves. In 1852, the slaves Mariel and Miguel entered into the court record when their wages for laboring on a tobacco estate in Pinar del Río were contested. In court proceedings, Don Juan Lugo sued Don Joaquin González for failing to compensate him for the rental of his two *siervos*, servants. These servants, Mariel and Miguel, were slaves, owned by Don Lugo and "under his exclusive domain." Both the slaves were from the Congo, and both of them were between fifteen and sixteen years of age. Beginning in August, 1851, Don Lugo instructed the two slaves to labor in the tobacco fields of Don González, whose failure to pay their rental wages resulted in the official proceedings. Don Lugo obtained a ruling that ordered, as penalty, Don González's current tobacco crop to be surrendered to Don Lugo; the rationale was that the two servants were working

831 "Diligencias formados por Don José Perez Peralta contra Don Marcos Acanta, para la entrega del negro que le vendió," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 218, exp. 1282, 1829. For a similar example of the importance of a slave's wages to the value of owning a slave, see Don Avendano, resident of the town of Pinar del Río, who brought suit against Don Miguel Villa for a 24 year old slave, Miguel, whom he had bought in 1863 for 400 pesos, yet had not been delivered to Don Avendano. This case was particularly drawn-out as it would go on for several years and cost over 1,300 reales. "Autos sobre entrega del esclavo Miguel Congo y sus jornales," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 503, exp. 3279, 1870. It is worth noting that the contestation over access to slaves was not limited to the elite levels slaves within Cuba's social hierarchy. For an account of an elite landowner failing to deliver, after a prolonged period, a slave Dionisio, purchased for 350 pesos by a former slave, see, "Expediente fromado por el moreno libre José Rosario, contra Don José de Ziqueira, para la entrega del negro Dionisio," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 218, exp. 1285, 1831.

on this crop.[832] Although the young slaves' wages were not recorded, the opportunity for additional income had presented itself because tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río was conducive to the hiring of seasonal or temporary slave labor.

Another example indicates who was renting slaves, where this was taking place, and the procedure involved. In the 1870s in the town of Viñales, a municipality in central Pinar del Río, Don. L. Prito, an owner of several slaves, filed registration papers that listed three of his slaves as *jornaleros*, or day laborers for hire. The official record reveals some key characteristics of the slaves who were customarily leased out, including age ranges and the general nature of their work. According to the official form, Don Prito listed the slaves Juan, age 41, Rita, age 24, and [ ] Dia, age 14, as *jornaleros*.[833] The form asked for the type of work the leased slaves were occupied in, as well as the name or type of farm. And although Don Prito failed to record these details, he did list the work the slaves were to be employed in as *de campo*, or field slaves. Although he did not indicate what kind of field work the slaves were doing, the centrality of tobacco to Pinar del Río's economy suggests that these slaves, like Mariel and Miguel, were to be leased for temporary work in tobacco cultivation.[834]

CONCLUSION

One of the most important features of the slave community in nineteenth-century Pinar del Río was a viable and pronounced internal economy. Tobacco's labor requirements, housing arrangements, and land allocation combined to facilitate slaves'

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832 "Expediente informative promovido por Don Juan [ ] Lugo para que les […] dos siervos que había alguilato a Don Joaquin González ya que este se alzó." AHPPR, IJC, leg. 218, exp. 1291,1852.

833 Interestingly, the record warned that any slave under the age of 14 listed as a jornalero would have to provide a baptismal certificate verifying their age.

834 "Expediente sobre padrón de esclavos y prestación de estos al ayuntamiento como jornaleros," AHPPR, IJC, leg. 243 exp. 1479, 1876.

independent production, marketing, and consumption. This internal economy represented a challenge to the very infrastructure upon which slavery depended.

The labor requirements and life conditions of tobacco slavery were far less exhaustive, and its routines were far more consistent than other slave-labor regimes in Cuba. These conditions permitted both the free time and physical ability to produce substantial quantities of both subsistence and surplus material goods. And from that foundation, slaves were able to act as independent operators in a market economy. The exchange of goods superseded conditions of bondage: what mattered was the value of the good, not the value of the person owning, marketing, or buying the good. Slave participation in this economy effectively delegitimized the inequity of slavery. The multiple avenues for economic participation by slaves engendered equality through market-based exchanges that held tremendous resonance for Cuban slaves. Whether they were trading with local monteros, shopkeepers, free blacks, or even those within palanques, Cuban slaves made decisions as people—and specifically, as people possessing property. The economic value of items outweighed slaves' imposed status and ensured that the condition of enslavement was neither absolute nor comprehensive.

The larger significance of an informal economy among the slave population residing in Pinar del Río was the enhanced access to freedom that it permitted through coartación. A central argument of this dissertation is that slaves living in the Vuelta Abajo and laboring under a tobacco–based regime had increased opportunities for freedom through self-purchase. As the examples of Teresa Carabali, Anastacio Crespo, and Juana Ramos prove, coartación did exist in the Vuelta Abajo, and these occurrences of coartación were very much related to the nature of tobacco cultivation. Structurally, the character of tobacco, with its low overhead, ease of cultivation, and immense

profitability, made tobacco an unparalleled means by which slaves could earn money to initiate the process of self-purchase. Contemporary observers such as Robert Taylor and the Sociedad Patriótica directly pointed to these attributes as a platform for the independent production of tobacco by slaves and for slaves. Meanwhile, the examples of Agustin Morera and others affirm the connection of tobacco with slave freedom. Tobacco was ideally suited for small-scale and independent production by slaves, coartados, and former slaves. In addition, the tobacco economy of Pinar del Río provided opportunities for slaves to be hired out. By laboring as *jornaleros* on a neighboring vega, slaves such as Mariel and Miguel earned important revenue that they could apply toward self-purchase.

A detailed accounting of coartación in Pinar del Río does not exist, and the archival record is incomplete, but there is one additional measure available for analyzing the extent of coartación in Pinar del Río. That measure is the number of slaves freed under the *patronato* system, the apprenticeship arrangement that marked final but gradual emancipation for Cuban slaves in the 1880s. In a study of the different avenues for freedom available to slaves under the patronato system and the frequency with which slaves used each option, Rebecca Scott lists the six major options available: mutual accord by both slave and master, renunciation by master, failure to adequately provide for the slave's well-being, various other causes, by an official lottery freeing slaves, and indemnification by *patrocinados*, or slaves listed this system

It is this last category, indemnification by patrocinado, or self-purchase by slaves, that illustrates the existence of slave wealth and slaves' ability to purchase their own freedom. As I have argued, the tobacco economy of the Vuelta Abajo was exceptionally conducive to coartación: it encouraged independent production, enabled slaves to

cultivate tobacco as a cash crop, and provided slaves with the time and opportunity to be hired out. The percentage of slaves in Pinar del Río freed by their own accord, under the category "indemnification by patrocinados," unmistakably supports this argument, both on a provincial level and in comparison with other areas in Cuba. According to Scott, 2,141 slaves possessed enough resources to pay their own purchase price. This number appears modest, as it represents only a small percentage of the overall slave population during this period. But slaves had multiple other options available to them for securing their freedom under the patronato system. Moreover, indemnification by patrocinados would have been the most difficult option because it required more resources than were required by mutual accord or a lottery system.

Additionally, while the number of more than 2,000 slaves initially appears small, this category represented 14 percent of slaves freed under the patronato system in Pinar del Río from 1881 to 1886.[835] Furthermore, this is an exceptional percentage in comparison with other areas in Cuba. Island-wide, 11 percent of slaves were freed under indemnification by patrocinados. And in the two sugar regions of Matanzas and Santa Clara, only 9 and 11 percent, respectively, of slaves were freed under indemnification by patrocinados.[836] As a result, I conclude that, compared with slaves elsewhere on the island, a far high proportion of slaves in the tobacco area of Pinar del Río freed themselves with the help of an informal economy that permitted accumulation of resources.

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[835] These figures are taken from Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 148, 190.

[836] Notably, the percentage of Pinar del Río greatly exceeded that of Havana, at just 9 percent, complicating the general understanding that slaves in urban areas had greater access and opportunity for the accumulation of monetary resources.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this dissertation originated as a challenge to the historiography of Cuban slavery and its near absolute focus on the role of sugar in this institution. Although historians and other scholars have recently begun to critique this singular analytical lens, and have even initiated significant attempts to explore the dynamic dimensions of Cuban enslavement, sugar continues to be the primary backdrop for all studies of Cuban slavery, including this one. This is despite the fact that sugar never possessed a majority of Cuba's slaves and that its economic dominance – only fully achieved at the midpoint of the nineteenth century – was relatively short-lived in the four-hundred-year-long history of Cuban slavery.

Of even more importance is that because of sugar's extremely exceptional labor structure, for the majority of Cuban slaves laboring outside the ingenio, the material experience was fundamentally different. In other places and in other economies, other slaves existed. And combining our understanding of sugar slavery with an understanding of the labor and lives of these other slaves allows us to more fully represent the totality of Cuban slavery. In this framework, it is possible to see sugar as atypical – even an aberration – in the history of Cuban slavery.

Slavery in the tobacco economy of Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century is just one conspicuous example of this counter narrative. Under this labor regime, the use of enslaved labor was longstanding; it began with the initiation of the African slave trade in Cuba as tobacco was directly exchanged for slaves, many of whom were destined for labor on the island's tobacco fields. In this early period of Cuban tobacco slavery, Francisco Arango unequivocally asserted that most vegas were worked by slaves, while officials remarked on the desire of Cuban vegueros for this particular type of laborer,

noting that these planters "clambered" for more slaves. The connection between tobacco and slavery would deepen over the following centuries as tobacco expanded alongside Cuba's plantation economy. In the nineteenth century, this connection intensified, and nowhere was this more true than in Pinar del Río, where in the epicenter of tobacco cultivation, the Vuelta Abajo, nearly every individual, free and enslaved, exclusively cultivated tobacco.

At the end of the monopoly in 1817, this area had just a few thousand slaves. Within a decade, the number of slaves in this area witnessed unprecedented expansion, with increases in this community far outpacing the average increases in the number of slaves in Cuba during the same period. This trend continued throughout the nineteenth century. From 1827 to 1846, the number of slaves in this area increased by 138 percent, with this exact same rate of growth occurring again from 1846 to 1862. Near the end of Cuban slavery, there were nearly 30,000 slaves laboring in Pinar del Río, according to one of the last official censuses taken during this period.

However, the total number of slaves attached to the tobacco fields in this province and the spectacular rate of growth of this population through the nineteenth century are not the full measure of slavery's resonance in this economy. In reevaluating Cuban tobacco slavery, the degree of reliance upon this workforce by planters is another critical indicator of just how important a role slaves played in cultivating tobacco. In the first half of the nineteenth century, slaves in Pinar del Río represented 64 percent of the total workforce on all vegas in the Vuelta Abajo. This figure increases when examined on a jurisdictional level, with the two leading tobacco centers of Pinar del Río and San Juan y Martínez allocating 70 and 89 percent of their workforce to enslaved laborers, respectively. Moreover, near the end of slavery, vegueros in this region demonstrated a

discernible preference for slave labor: they held onto their slaves, from 1862 to 1877, at rates that either matched or exceeded those of all other provinces on the island, except for Matanzas.

In addition to attempting to integrate the slaves in Pinar del Río into the larger framework of Cuban slavery, this dissertation has privileged the structure of labor as the central component in understanding this particular slave community. Because slavery was essentially a system of forced labor, the exact nature of how slaves labored largely determined their overall experience of enslavement. Moreover, in any analysis of Cuban slavery, the importance of distinguishing labor regimes remains paramount as long as sugar retains its dominant status in the historical scholarship. It was the fundamental differences in work patterns and requirements that separated the two slave systems of sugar and tobacco. Unlike the abattoir of Cuba's sugar mills, tobacco vegas subjected its slaves to tasks far less arduous and seasonal cycles far less intense. The most important consequence resulting from the difference in labor structure was the impact that tobacco cultivation had upon slave demography and opportunities for freedom, including the ability of slaves to form families and to initiate the process of coartación.

In terms of demography, the reduced labor requirements of tobacco ensured that a wide variety of laborers could be employed, including women, children, and the elderly – the very demographics that formed the basis of family formation in the slave community. In fact, many contemporary observers specifically pointed to the suitability of slave children and females for cultivation of this particular crop. In Pinar del Río, this feature of tobacco slavery produced a consistently high ratio of female to male slaves, with census data indicating that females were 40 percent of all slaves, as measured in both 1817 and 1877. High numbers of slave children can also be seen in the tobacco economy

of this region, especially in contrast to central sugar zones. In 1871, Pinar del Río and San Cristóbal, located in the heart of the Vuelta Abajo, possessed the largest percentages of young slaves (4-10 years of age), with San Cristóbal having almost twice as many slaves in this age range as the sugar area of Matanzas, and Pinar del Río having 35 percent more slaves in this age range than Matanzas. Although Cuba's plantation economy made family formation among the slave community precarious, the distinct demographic features of tobacco cultivation, specifically a greater gender balance and a high percentage of slave children, provided a foundation from which slaves had enhanced opportunities for familial arrangements.

Slave family formation in Pinar del Río was also aided by a particular feature of the tobacco economy, the bohío. This independent housing structure facilitated the cohabitation of slave families while also providing a relative degree of autonomy for slaves to create and control personal and communal connections within a space that many slaves considered their own property. The form of the bohío, especially in contrast to the barracón that defined the slave experience on Cuban ingenios, proved to be an integral component in establishing and maintaining the slave family, according to both contemporary observers and historians. In the nineteenth century, Anselmo Suárez and José Montalvo insisted upon this form as the primary means by which slaves configured social relations and preserved their humanity, while more recently, Carmen Barcia and William Van Norman have asserted that the bohío was the structure most able to sustain family life in the slave community.

The structure of tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Río also permitted an additional benefit to slaves in this area and under this economy that was not as readily available to slaves elsewhere in Cuba: conucos. Due to the economics of tobacco, in which land could

be allocated for subsistence production, and the labor requirements of this crop, which granted relatively higher degrees of energy and time to vega dotaciones, slaves in Pinar del Río customarily practiced independent production of both food staples and tobacco as a cash crop. The opportunity to engage in an informal economy held tremendous implications for the material lives and identities of tobacco-based slaves. As a result of conuco cultivation, this community was able to fundamentally alter the nature of enslavement, transforming imposed conditions as force laborers to also include new roles as producers, marketers, and consumers. While the economics and labor structure of tobacco permitted the independent production of goods by slaves on vegas, tobacco itself proved just as important to the internal economy of this community. As noted in the nineteenth-century examples provided by the writer John Taylor and in the archival examples of Teresa Carabali and others, it was tobacco that allowed slaves to quickly and easily acquire substantial sums of money – money that was often used for self-purchase. It is this feature of Cuban tobacco slavery in Pinar del Río during the nineteenth century that most distinguishes this labor regime from sugar and that consequently most alters the overall understanding of Cuban slavery.

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